黒鉄 Kuro Gane

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KUROGANE 1

Kei Toume

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Adapted by Alex Kent
Lettered by Gabriel Lee Levine

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HONORIFICS EXPLAINED

Throughout the Del Rey Manga books, you will find Japanese honorifics left intact in the translations. For those not familiar with how the Japanese use honorifics, and, more important, how they differ from American honorifics, we present this brief overview.

Politeness has always been a critical facet of Japanese culture. Ever since the feudal era, when Japan was a highly stratified society, use of honorifics—which can be defined as polite speech that indicates relationship or status—has played an essential role in the Japanese language. When addressing someone in Japanese, an honorific usually takes the form of a suffix attached to one's name (example: "Asuna-san"), as a title at the end of one's name, or in place of the name itself (example: "Negi-sensei" or simply "Sensei!").

Honorifics can be expressions of respect or endearment. In the context of manga and anime, honorifics give insight into the nature of the relationship between characters. Many translations into English leave out these important honorifics, and therefore distort the feel of the original Japanese. Because Japanese honorifics contain nuances that English honorifics lack, it is our policy at Del Rey not to translate them. Here, instead, is a guide to some of the honorifics you may encounter in Del Rey Manga.

-san: This is the most common honorific and is equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., Mrs., etc. It is the all-purpose honorific and can be used in any situation where politeness is required.

-sama: This is one level higher than "-san." It is used to confer great respect.

-dono: This comes from the word "tono," which means "lord." It is an even higher level than "-sama" and confers utmost respect.

-kun: This suffix is used at the end of boys' names to express familiarity or endearment. It is also sometimes used by men among friends, or when addressing someone younger or of a lower station.

-chan: This is used to express endearment, mostly toward girls. It is also used for little boys, pets, and between lovers. It gives a sense of childish cuteness.

Bozu: This is an informal way to refer to a boy, similar to the English terms "kid" or "squirt."

Sempai/ Senpai: This title suggests that the addressee is one's senior in a group or organization. It is most often used in a school setting, where underclassmen refer to their upperclassmen as "sempai." It can also be used in the workplace, such as when a newer employee addresses an employee who has seniority in the company.

Kohai: This is the opposite of "-sempai," and is used toward underclassmen in school or newcomers in the workplace. It connotes that the addressee is of a lower station.

Sensei: Literally meaning "one who has come before," this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.

-[blank]: This is usually forgotten on these lists, but is perhaps the most significant difference between Japanese and English. The lack of honorific means that the speaker has permission to address the person in a very intimate way. Usually, only family, spouses, or very close friends have this kind of license. Known as *yobisute*, it can be gratifying when someone who has earned the intimacy starts to call one by one's name without an honorific. But when that intimacy hasn't been earned, it can also be insulting.

黒針
KURO GANE
1
Kei Toume

黒鉄
KURO GANE
冬目景

黒鉄 KURO GANE

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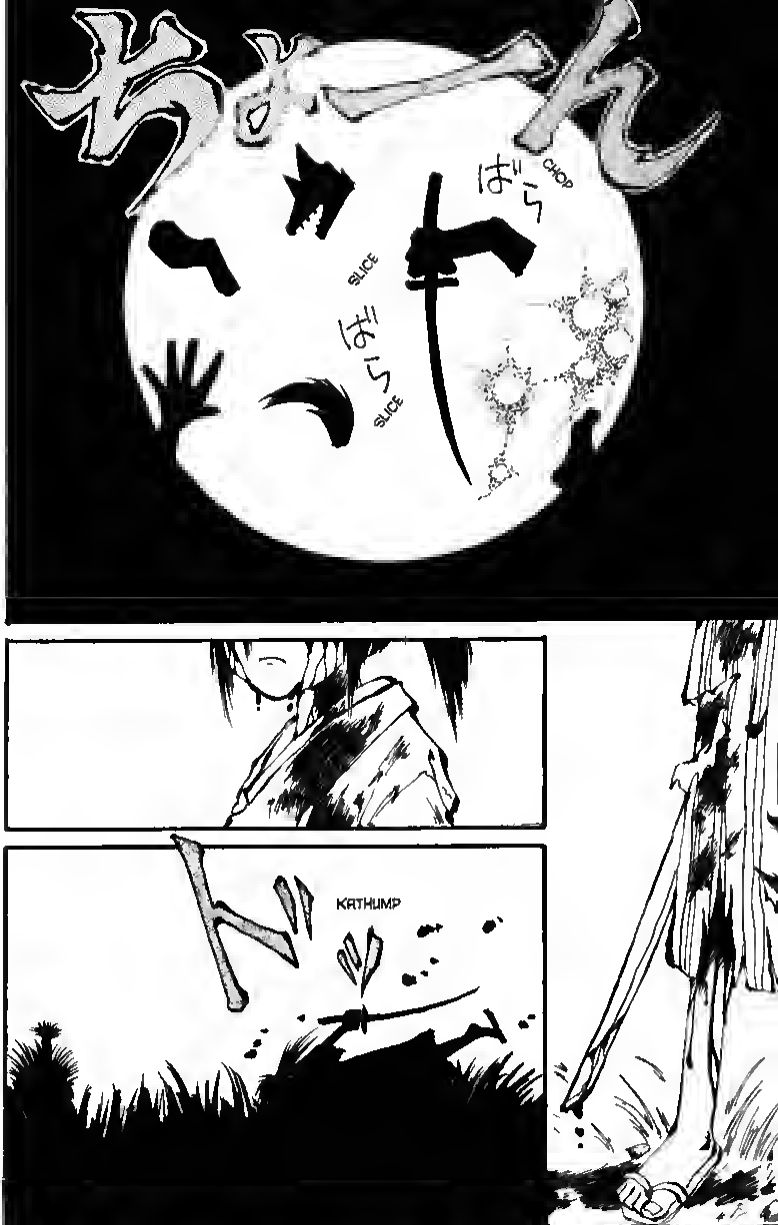
第二幕 DEAD MAN (亡者)
第一景 Episode 1 59
第二景 Episode 2 103

第三幕 CAT GIRL (鍵猫) 159

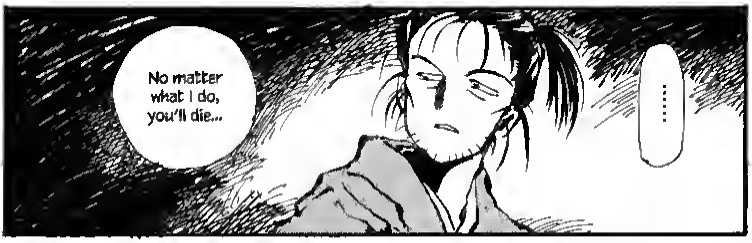
Have you heard of Jintetsu? The assassin?
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
That's him. He's just a kid.
But they say he's already a great samurai.
Everybody's been talking about him.. there's a bounty for his head, right?
PANT
PANT
GRRR
GRRR
They also say if he even looks at you, strange things happen..
Strange things? Like what?
SQUEEZE
SWISH
SWISH

第一幕
THE DEAD REBORN
(亡者誕生)
Chapter 1


ちょき
ばら
CHOP
SLICE
ばら
SLICE
KATHUMP

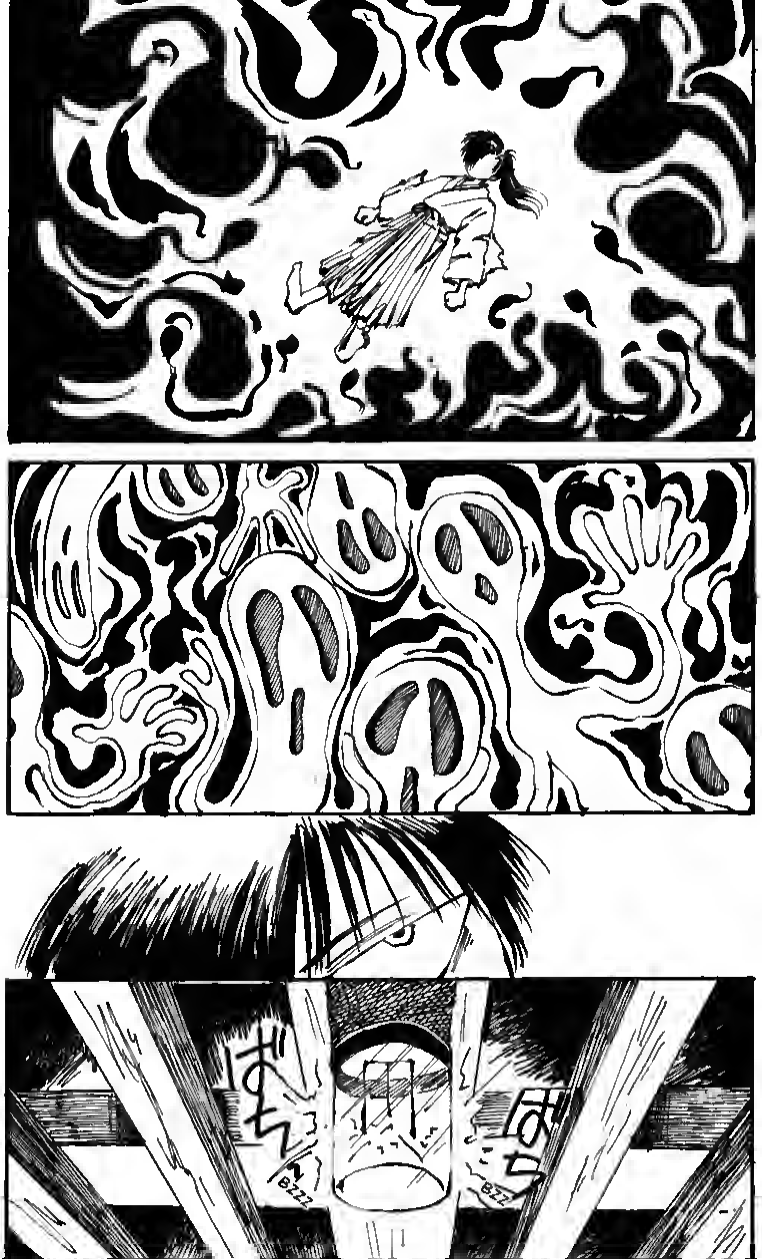
The dogs tore out your throat, huh...?
CHAKI..
Are you, Jintetsu the assassin, by any chance?
...Huh...
And here I thought you'd be a big tough guy.

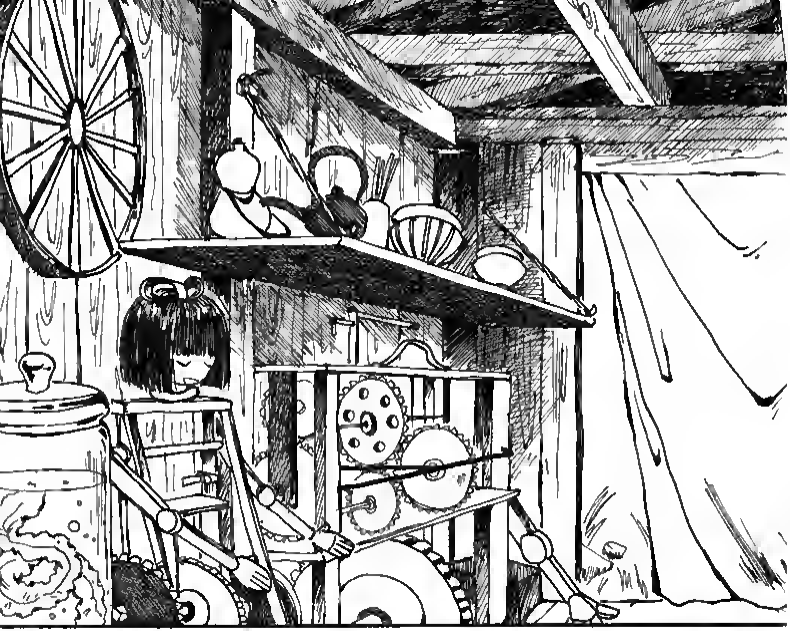
I'm not afraid to die..
If you want to kill me, do it now...
.....

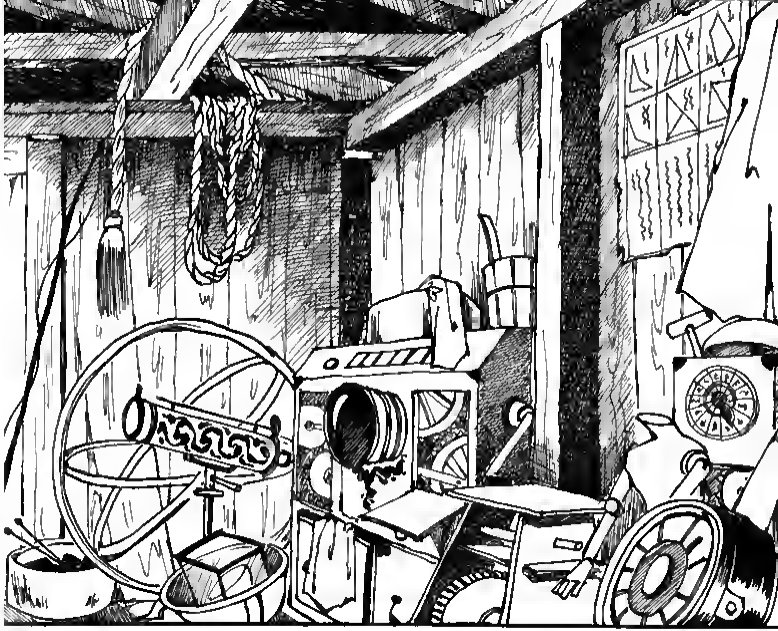

No matter what I do, you'll die...
.....

He's dead...

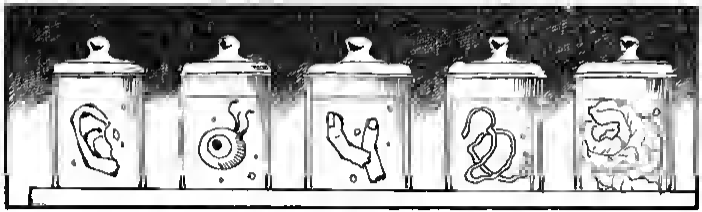
...I don't care about the bounty...
Anyway

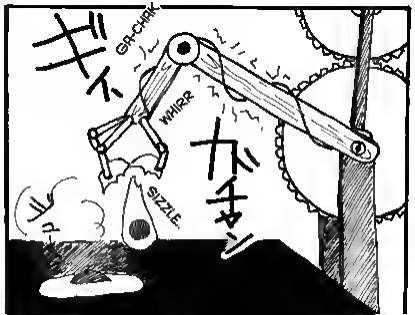

ぼち
BZZZ
ぼち
BZZZ

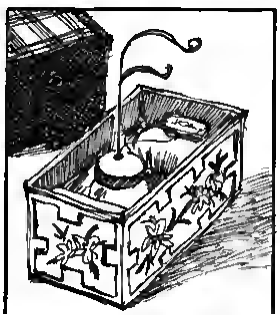




Want some eggs?
Hey, you're awake...




GR-CHRK
WHIRR
SIZZLE



How do you feel?
Just kidding... Ha ha! ...I know you can't eat this stuff anymore.
Do you remember me?
It was about three months ago.
TMP TMP
...
...
You owe me...
But it's thanks to me you weren't beheaded. And that your head isn't on display in the town square right now
Guess you don't remember.
And just for a few seconds...
MUNCH MUNCH
MUNCH MUNCH
And your head wouldn't be worth more than a few ryou.
KTA KTA
...if they heard the great Jintetsu was done in by a bunch of dogs...
People would laugh...

You know, I had to bring you here without anybody seeing you.
Then you got your blood all over my best kimono... crap.
Anyway... how did they catch a warrior like you off guard?
Never underestimate beasts. They're killing machines. It's in their nature.
...And you stole my bed... I've been sleeping on the floor for three months straight
...Oh, by bed, I mean futon... you're on it now.
TMP TMP
.....
.....
...So... by the way...
GISHI

In exchange for taking care of you..
I made use of your dead body.
GHEE
.....
GHISHI
GHISHI

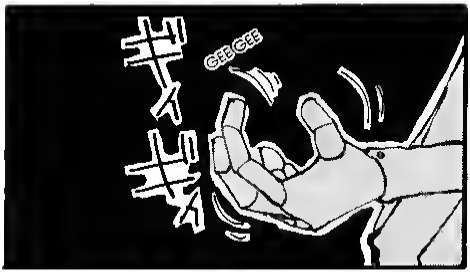
In the past, I tried experimenting on bodies I dug up in graveyards, but it never actually worked...
As I suspected, the corpse had to be fresh...
GOSOH GOSOH
GHISHI GHISHI
I made use of all the parts I could..
You were a bloody mess.
I connected the nerves in your right and left eyes...
GHISHI GHISHI
...But your voice was beyond repair. So was that scar on your face.
...Try hiding it with this towel.
BASAH
What?
Wa...Wait just a minute.

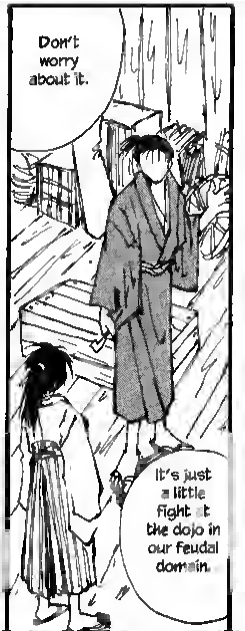
Don't get upset. At least I saved your life.
GI
BAM
You need time to get used to your new body...
Oh man.. I warned you..
You were a great samurai..
...It would be a shame if your powers were lost forever...
And I didn't do it just to show off.
EVERY THING
Even Jintetsu couldn't have escaped Santa's dogs...
...The body is just gone...
...Santa the dog trainer was chasing him
But I swear I saw it..
You can't find his body?

I'm a scientist. I also dabble in Chinese medicine.
My name used to be pretty well known.
My name is Gen-kichi.
(Criminal warning)
WANTED:
DEAD OR ALIVE.
REWARD: 1000 ryou.
Perhaps Santa failed to kill him? Santa is dead, too, right?
The ground was soaked in blood. Someone else died there, too.
...it's a long story... now I'm just a poor, masterless samurai.
SIZZLE SIZZLE...
And I'm a samurai who's put aside his sword.
So it's hard to make ends meet.
PARA PARA PARA
I shouldn't say this out loud but...
...I make a living selling marijuana and opium powder.
Ah... That's the stuff.
すはー
SPARK
.....

All you have to do is show off your swordsmanship.
It's nothing much...

But anyway...
I have a favor to ask of you.


GEE GEE


Don't worry about it.
It's just a little fight at the dojo in our feudal domain.

Can you move your hands?
GEE GEE

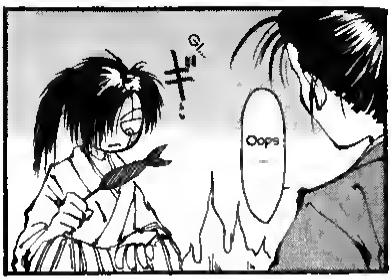
We'll get you into shape eventually.
Don't overdo it.
SWOOSH
POW
SPLASH

SPLASH SPLASH
HOO
PACHI PACHI

GI...
Just a few more, please.

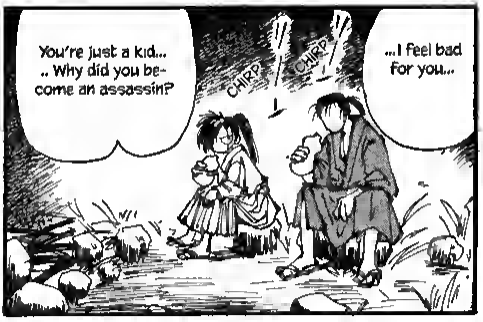
These are nice and big...
That's all. Good work.
AH..
PANT PANT

PACHI PACHI
GO...


GI...
Oops

HAHA HAHA
PACHI PACHI

This is your dinner.


You're just a kid... .. Why did you become an assassin?
CHIRP
CHIRP
...I feel bad for you...

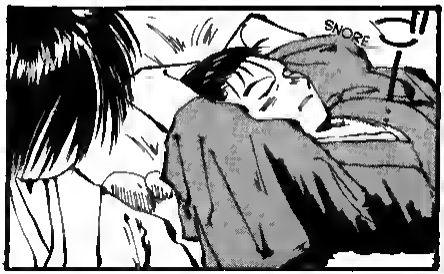
I've been thinking...
CHIRP
CHIRP

We all have a story to tell...
Well... I won't ask you that... Can't talk anyhow...

I didn't choose to be a poor, masterless samurai...
I did choose not to use a sword...
But I'm a little smarter than the average guy
...so what I want is to influence people..
GRO
The age of the samurai is almost over.
But God gave me other talents.
I'm a genius, right?
CHIRP
CHIRP
It's funny, but when you first moved..
How should I put this..
It made me happy...

A genius could get used to living in a place like this.
But I have to say...

Maybe this is what a father feels when his child is born?
So it's not exactly the same, huh..
HA HA HA


SNORE

.....
CHIRP CHIRP

ZAWA ZAWA

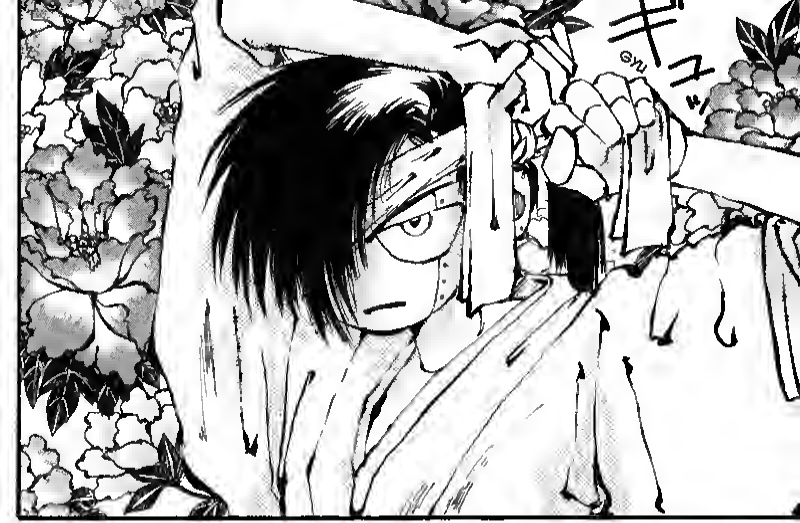
ZA ZA ZA ZA

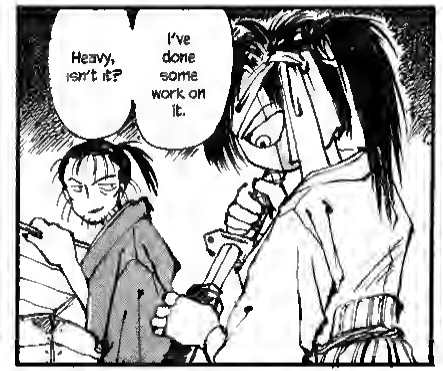
You are a great man...
I would even sacrifice my life for you...

Your master killed my father! Get out of my way or I'll kill you.
Out of my way, Kagemitsu!
I can't let you pass here.
I'm sworn to protect my master's life to the death
Jintetsu.. I cannot let you pass.
Why, Kagemitsu? My father was unarmed when your master murdered him!
My life is yours, Master. I have no regrets.
You're not a samurai, so you'll never understand, but...
Forgive me... Jintetsu!
!

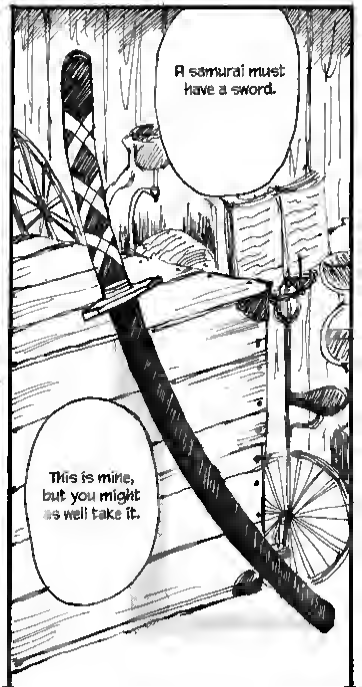
CHIRP CHIRP
ZAKI...
GIN...
HO

Even after your death...
your good name will be—
written above your grave...
CHIRP
CHIRP


ギュッ


Heavy, isn't it?
I've done some work on it.

I'll give you this imported gunbelt, too

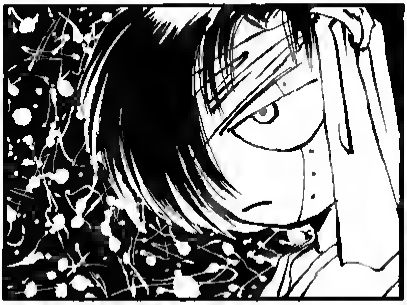

A samurai must have a sword.
This is mine, but you might as well take it.

Take these leather shoes.
They're too small for me.
And this hat..
.....
...isn't exactly you, is it?...
Hope there's more good stuff in here.
.....
GOSO GOSO
ZZT

I haven't been out in public in a while.
WHISPER
WHISPER
Matsu Feudal Clan Office
It's Hirama.
Let us pass

Don't worry.
Nobody knows you're Jintetsu the assassin.
You've been reborn.
...No Enemies.
Unrivaled.
Who the hell is he..
He looks like a monster..

I sense a dark cloud around him..
..He's not normal.



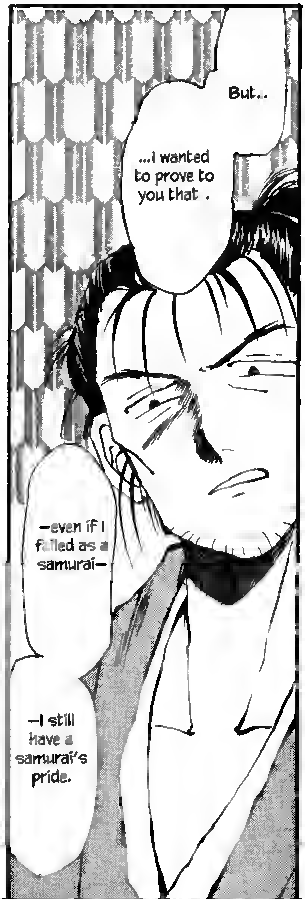
Ready... go!

GRCOHON

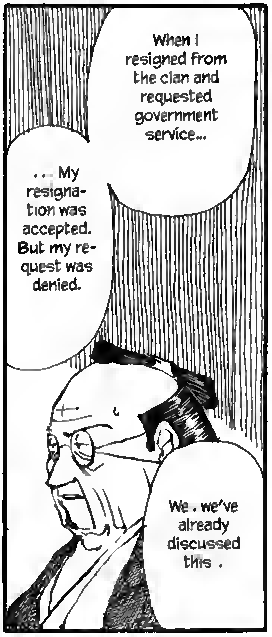
URGH...
KARAN
He defeated our assistant instructor so quickly...
It's been a long time.. Hirama..
Is this the one who just fought?

I created him only yesterday.
He doesn't have one yet.
What's his name?
He's quite skillful, despite his unusual appearance
He is half human and half steel.
What?
Absolutely not
Why are you wasting my time with jokes?
Wha.. what are you talking about..

But here is the result of my experiments.
—you said it was worthless.
You always ridiculed my private research—


But..
...I wanted to prove to you that .
—even if I failed as a samurai—
—I still have a samurai's pride.

May-be..
...you're right...
...that as a samurai, I'm a failure...


When I resigned from the clan and requested government service...
... My resignation was accepted. But my request was denied.
We . we've already discussed this .

Because of this—
—I will never be anything but a masterless samurai.

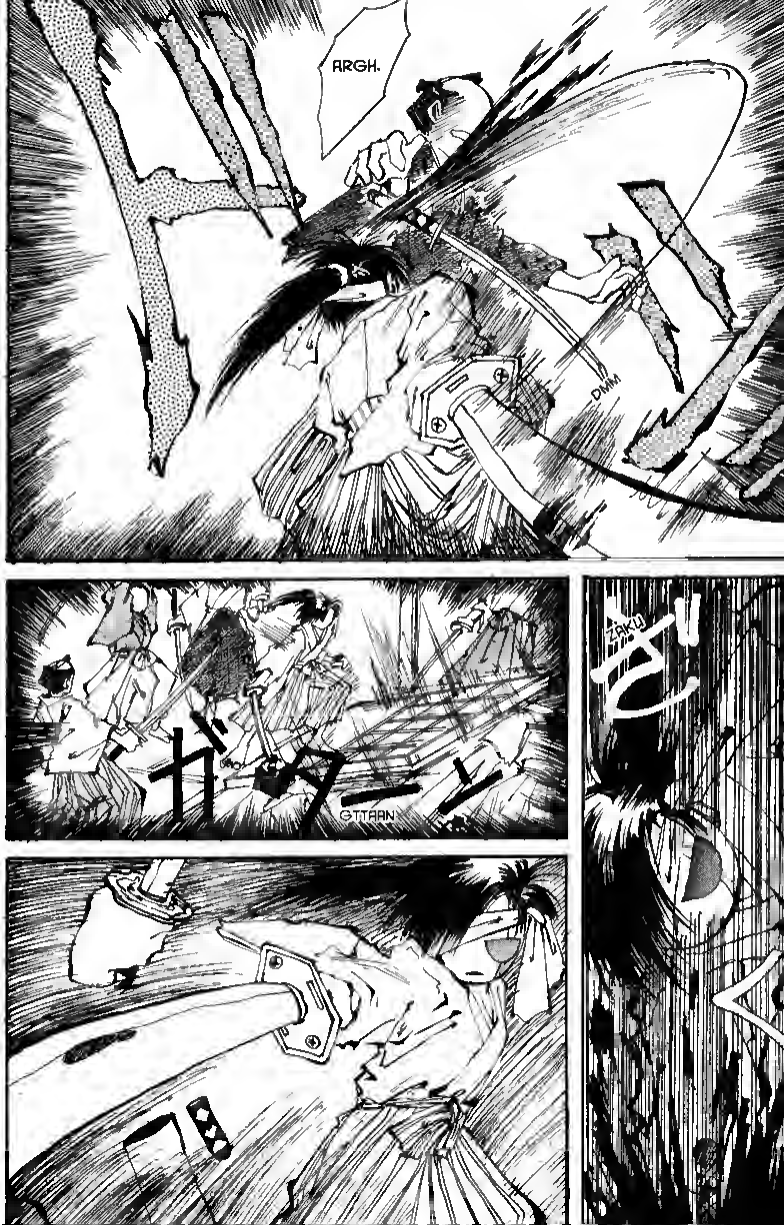
BASA
I bet you recognize—
—the pattern on this kimono...

I knew you couldn't have forgotten.
!
.....
It was one year ago.. the official story is that a lady from the teahouse, Taki, killed herself—
—in front of the clan office's gate...
She was stabbed in the chest with a short sword. But the sword wasn't her own...
Not long before, she'd accidentally caught you embezzling the clan's money.
No matter what I say, people will say it's just the howling of a defeated dog.
So I promised Taki that, after I proved her innocent—
—I would join her in death...
...and take you with me to hell!

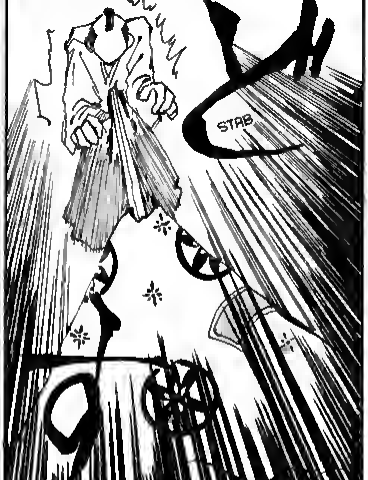
P. Please help, someone!
BAM

I suspected you all along, wearing that weird mask.
Are you his partner!?
.....

Say some-thing, freak!
SSH
KLIK


ARGH.
DMM
GTTRRN
ZAKU

GAN
STAB


STAB

……
ヤキ…
..Huh.
I'm not afraid to die.
If you're going to kill me, kill me now.
Oh well... I'm a dead man anyway.
……
……
Do you...
. hate me?. .
……

I happened to be born a samurai...
so I was fated to die like this...
I used you...
I sealed your doom when I picked up your corpse that day...
Heh...
PANT
PANT
But I'm sorry for what I've done to you..
I just dream-ed.
...For a mo-ment...
PANT
COUGH

Hey, you, wait up!
You can't just leave me here!

I'm your sword.
You can't abandon me.
.....
I'll get rusty if nobody polishes me.
.....
work on it.
A samurai must have a sword.
Don't you think?

I'm more high-tech than you.
Unlike you, I can actually talk.
I'm Hagaremaru.
As if you could say it anyway.

It's like they say. "In traveling one want's a companion; in life, compassion." Nice to meet you, partner.
.....
WANTED:
DEAD OR ALIVE
REWARD: 1000 Eyes

THE END OF CHAPTER 1 -

FLAP
Crap.
Where did he go?

!

第二幕
DEAD MAN
（亡者）
—第一景—
Chapter 2
Episode 1

BSSR
CRK
ZAT ZAT
ZZR
BSSR
TING
Good job
Here's your
fee.

Now take it and scram.
Is he gone?
Ah Yeah ..
Who is he?...Why does he wear that mask?..It's creepy
Jintetsu the steel man Been skulking around town all week.

The Jintetsu with the price on his head? I heard he died six months ago.
Jintetsu?
Is he an impostor?
But he fights like Jintetsu used to...
I don't know...
The crows are making a racket...
I've been traveling with you a year...
...even the air around you is not like anywhere else...

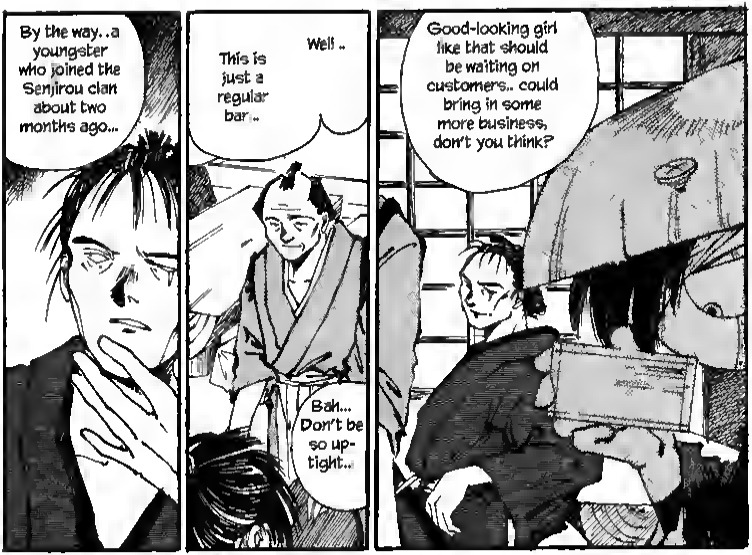
Not too tight!
GST...
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
Apply the camellia oil to your elbow...
Up in heaven, Genkichi is smiling.
I wish I could move by myself
Looks like you're getting used to taking care of your body.

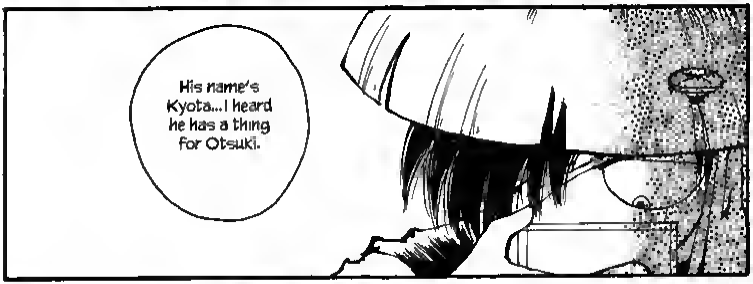
Genkichi liked to say he was a genius at Dutch studies.
So. . . Maybe he could've given me arms and legs...
Like this. .
...I bet if Genkichi had lived...
He could have restored your right eye and your voice...
You're the strong, silent type, anyway.
Well...as long as I'm with you, I'll be your voice.
You have a mission now .
. .not to waste the life that Genkichi gave you...
PAD
PAD

Shop
Mito
Hotel
Chu
An
Inn

Hello...
Sake, please...
Food and drink.
Hey, I said I'd carry it for you..
And I said no thanks.

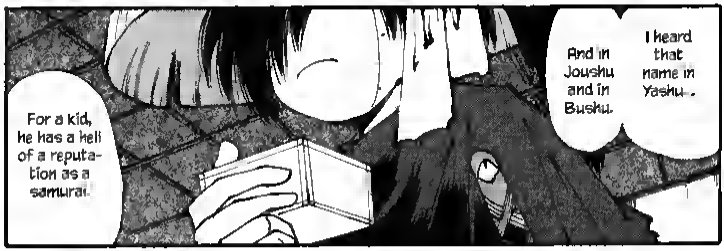
Don't think that I'm easy just because my family owns a bar...
Yeah, I've heard members of the Eizo family have been coming to your bar... ...So even I'm reluctant to go there.
I haven't seen your boss lately.
I...just wanted to help. It looks heavy....
Like I said, I'm fine.
I hope you guys won't fight...
What...? She's why I keep coming here.
I'm sorry, she's out shopping right now.
Where's Otsuki-chan today?


By the way..a youngster who joined the Senjirou clan about two months ago...
Well ..
This is just a regular bar..
Bah... Don't be so up-tight..
Good-looking girl like that should be waiting on customers.. could bring in some more business, don't you think?


His name's Kyota...I heard he has a thing for Otsuki.

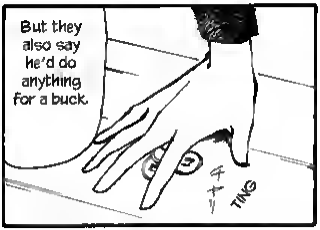
And she's waiting for Jintetsu, who left the village four years ago.
She likes to play hard to get.
Huh.. he should just give it up.

Hold on. Jintetsu!?
The Jintetsu? So he's from around here.


I heard that name in Yashu...
And in Joushu and in Bushu.
For a kid, he has a hell of a reputation as a samurai.

Jintetsu is dead.

Can it be him she likes? Because I also heard that...
Thank you.


But they also say he'd do anything for a buck.
TING

Yeah, he'd kill women, children... even the innocent
CLATTER
He's like the devil

Hello, Ihachi-san...
Hey, Otsuki-chan. I've been waiting for you.
I'm home.
What was up with him..he looked strange.
There's been a lot of drifters around lately..
Otsuki!
I've heard about you guys, too.
So. tell me What have you heard?
So you're Kyota.
I've heard a lot about you.

I heard you're a big-mouth, no-good drifter.
. What the hell did you just say .
GTR...
But you squeeze them for half a month's income.
I heard the Eizo family extorts money from katagi.
You say they pay you to put out fires. . .
That must add up to a pretty penny.
Kyota!
So what. If there's a fire, my clan puts it out.
Only because if you didn't, you'd lose your homes, too.
GRUBB
Gamblers like you are a plague on our village.
What you're doing is worse than extortion!
How dare you!

You're mad because I'm right.
That's enough from you.
CHIN
CHIN
Both of you, stop.
This is my family's bar.
I won't allow fighting.
Thanks for the advice, old man.
Kyota, stop it. I want you out of here, too
For Otsuki's sake, I'll let you go free.
But, son, if you want to live, shut up.

I have to warn you...
About the fire-fighting fee..keep quiet about it.

Don't get mad at me, Otsuki.
I'm a samurai who fights for justice.
You're just a hot-headed young man.

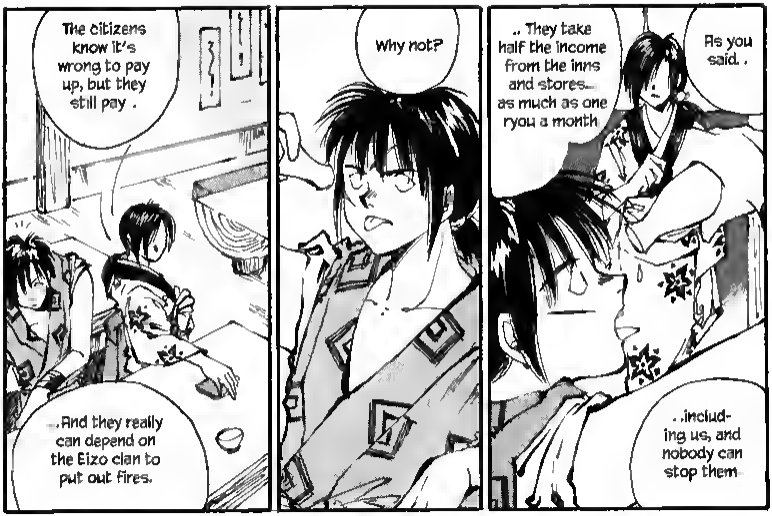
We know it all too well.

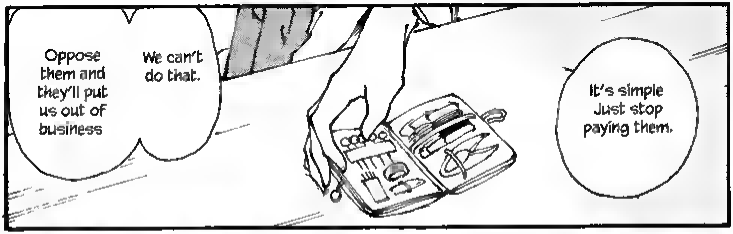
You're right, it's extortion.

Why do you say that...

You're new around here, so you wouldn't know.

About the incident a few years ago...

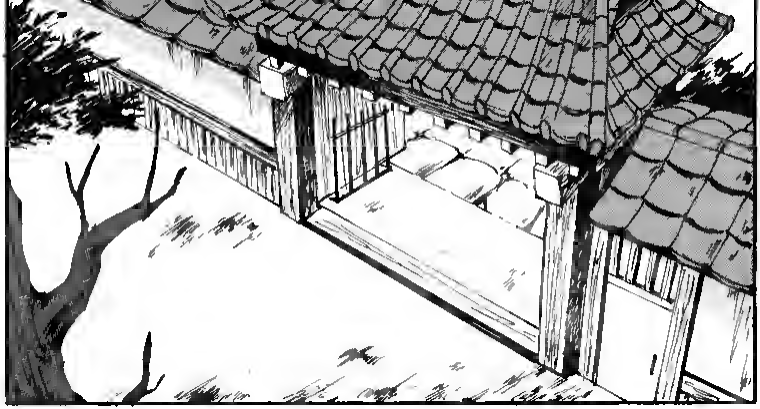

The citizens know it's wrong to pay up, but they still pay .
..And they really can depend on the Eizo clan to put out fires.
Why not?
.. They take half the income from the inns and stores... as much as one ryou a month
As you said. .
..including us, and nobody can stop them


Oppose them and they'll put us out of business
We can't do that.
It's simple Just stop paying them.

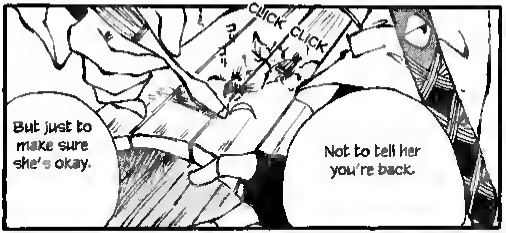
Tell me about the incident.

We're all afraid of the Eizo family..

.. It was four years ago ..
The Eizo family controlled the village.
A woodcarver decided to rebel against them
Even then they were extortionists...
He was killed...
...we don't know who did it..
He asked the villagers to join him..
...and just when many were ready to help...
It wasn't the Eizo clan...
...a government official killed him.
I hope now you'll stay out of other people's affairs.
Eizo paid off the village head.. so it was never investigated seriously.



To see Otsuki?


Click
Click
But just to make sure she's okay.
Not to tell her you're back.

.....
I know how you feel.
If she's happy, you are too...

Why did you came back to your hometown?

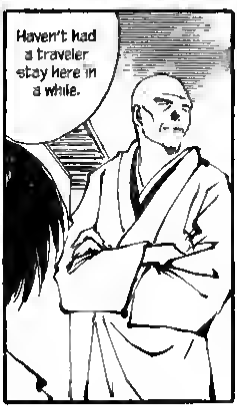
Thank you for fixing the bucket.
I hope you slept well.
Oh...

A traveler...
Please, have some tea.

You're quite an artist.

I'm glad we're getting business as a rest stop...
...But we've had some problems...

...But the town's getting pretty lively...
It's a good place for a traveler to stop on his way to Kousyu.


Haven't had a traveler stay here in a while.

The moneylenders who control this area, Eizo of Yugi and Senjirou of Yarimizu, are fighting.
It's an explosive situation.
Hotel Kiwaseya
Really... what kind?
Then a few years ago he started his own business.
Master Senjiro was once an agent for Eizo. .
slurp
You'd be well-advised to leave soon
That's why travelers avoid this town—
We're all scared, so no one complains..
Yes—Master Eizo has been collecting fees from us citizens. .for protection and fighting fires and so on.
I bet even the villagers don't feel safe

The artisan's son killed the official in revenge and we thought Eizo would leave us alone...
Four years ago an artisan rebelled against Master Eizo and was killed
Four years ago an artisan rebelled against Master Eizo and was killed.
Chief priest. .
Here's the sake you ordered...

...for me...
Oh, no.. this traveler is fixing it...
Oh... you're repairing the bucket?
Ah.. Otsuki-san.
.....
That's strange.. he was just here talking to me.

ZZBB
SPLASH
SPLASH
Do it somewhere else.
You're driving the fish away.
SPLASH
SPLASH
Hey.

It's okay, Bunkichi.
He was here first.
We can go elsewhere.
.....
But, Master...
Master Senjiro is here.
He doesn't look like the master of a clan..
He looks so young and sensible...
Master...?

Hey.
Hi..
For Master Senjiro, I'd give up a tenth or even half of my money.
Quiet.. someone will hear you.
HA HA
Your boss is very popular.
Huh... you think so.
He has a big heart.
Two months ago I was just a drifter. He said I had promise and let me join his clan
Where are you from?
That's in the past. I've already forgotten where I was born.
My clan is now my family.
They do say that by pledging loyalty you become a member of the family...

You must not get along with the other members.
I'm a loner...a real lone wolf.
But you're always by yourself.
Don't let it go to your head.
I'm new and already I'm more skilled than any of them.
Huh...because they're *jealous*...
What are you waiting for? He's not coming back.
You know, I'd even give up my pinky finger for you. Settle down, maybe start a family.
I'm flattered you're worrying about me
Don't be silly...

Jintetsu will come back.
Even if he's alive, in four years he hasn't returned.
He's forgotten all about you.
I heard he's an assassin.
That's not true!
He killed an official, he can't come back.
Jintetsu is still alive.
You heard that rumor, too.
He's dead in a ditch somewhere.

BRAM
DSHA
Get out of here.
CLITTER

Thanks for the sake.
Inn, Shimadaya

For me...?
Jintetsu... why...
I'm leaving town toni...
Take care, Otsuki...

Hey.. Kyota-san Let's talk...
Do you...have a minute?
It's Eizo's goons...
What can I do for you?

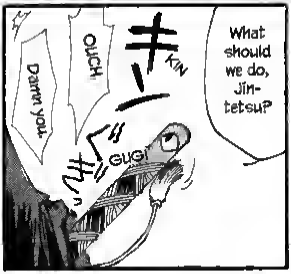
DASH!!!
The same one I saw at the temple..
I wonder why I didn't notice it sooner..
This design..
Take care of yourself.
Thanks for everything..
CAW!
Nice to sleep under a roof for a change...

...Damn you!
You had trouble sleeping in the temple.
Well...maybe you've just gotten used to sleeping outdoors...
SCTRCH SCTRCH
I told you to stop spreading rumors.
.. for my master to bring down your clan
You little bastard...it'll be all too easy ...
What do you mean, rumors?
You mean the fact that Master Eizo is an extortionist?

Strutting around our territory as if you're important.
Son, you're getting on my nerves.
CHA

Shut the hell up.
I'm sick and tired of you.

SST...


What should we do, Jintetsu?
KIN
OUCH
Damn you
GUGI

You little fool. .but I guess it takes courage to get into a fix like this.
Let's get him.

Well, it's none of our business.
PITCH
DAMMIT

But four against one isn't exactly fair.
Heel kick!
ARGH
Hey...I may be strong.
PUNCH
Don't mess with us.
ZZT ZZT ZZT ZZT

DSHA
Wha...
UKGH...
Who the hell are you?

SWOOSH
Don't...Don't kill him!
CHK
GET
ARGH

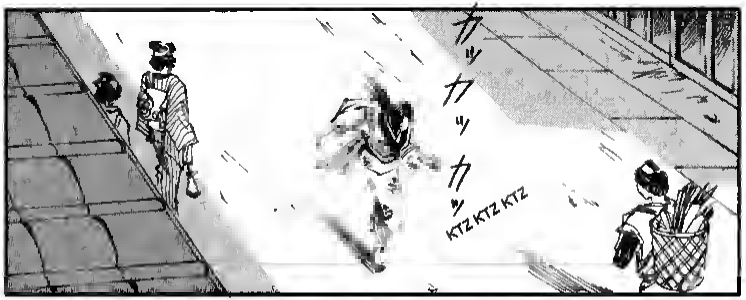
First of all... you're...
CHATTER CHATTER
Hey, handle with care! I'm a sensitive, high-performance device!!
In a foreign language I'd be called "delicate." Keep that in mind!!
GRAB
You little brat
GET
KICK
DDT

GANK

DSSA
SCRATCH SCRATCH
.....
Hey, man, thanks for the help.
Hey.
ZZT ZZT
You're a Toseirin, too, right?
I'm Kyota Syakuji of the Senjiro clan.
Kyota...?
What's your name?
You're very strong.

You're pretty strong, too... Kyot- san...
Oh, thanks.
Never heard of you...
Someone with your skills should be famous...
But...
It's Genta. I'm a drifter from Jyousyu.
.....
You're not hurt, because of your good reflexes...
...which you probably earned from years of street fighting but...
Your life was in danger, and you avoided cutting them with your short blade.
I didn't kill them because Eizo would kill me if I did.
Wha... What are you talking about?
You must not...have killed anyone before...
.....

Jintetsu..
You didn't help him because you wanted to..
But it wasn't just a whim either...
.....
Whoever you are..
..you're reading too much into it.
CAW CAW
It was because you heard that samurai was from the Eizo clan...
.. Am I right?
BSSSH
...the real reason you came back to this town...
Jintetsu...
Now I'm starting to realize...


カッカッカッ
KTZ KTZ KTZ

PANT...

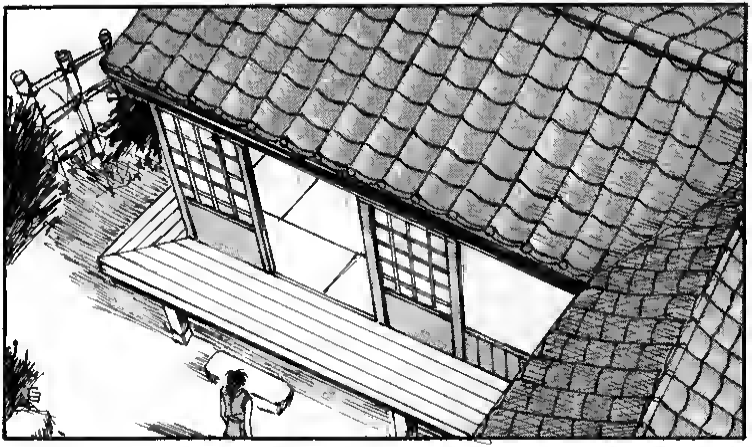
He left...
...A little while ago...

Ah—what happened to the traveler who was staying here...?
Otsuki-san, what's the matter?

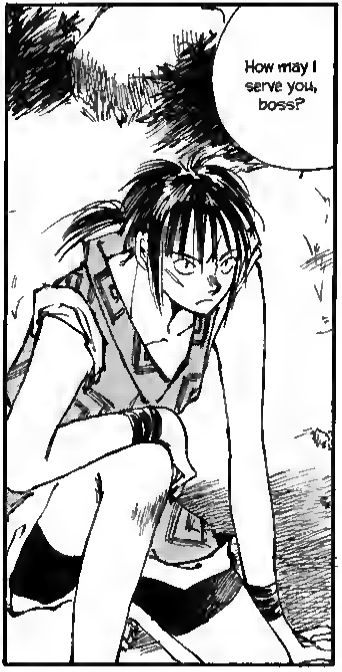
Chief priest...

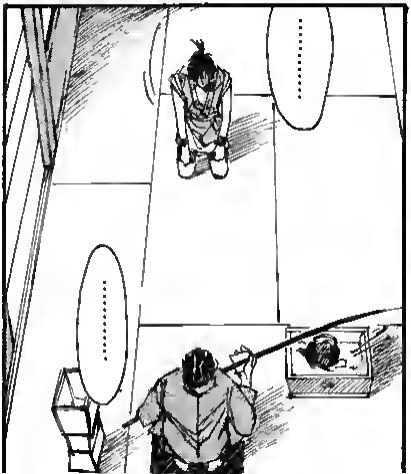
Oh...No...
He left..?
Did you need him for something?
KTZ
Jintetsu...
...Why...
-The End of Chapter 2, Episode 1-

第二幕
DEAD MAN
(亡者)
—第一景—
Chapter 2
DEAD MAN
Episode 2



Come in.
Oh, Kyota.


How may I serve you, boss?

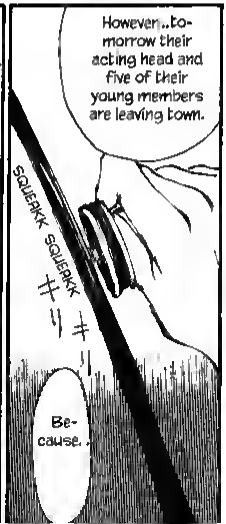

.....
.....

So you fought some members of the Eizo family

One day, we will all have to fight the Eizo clan...

Ye.. Yes... but they attacked me first..
..An...And I took care not to injure them...

Eizo's brother in Matsudo passed away and they are going there on behalf of Eizo...


However...tomorrow their acting head and five of their young members are leaving town.
SQUEAKK SQUEAKK
Because..

Of course, their clan is so much larger than ours, we have no chance of victory.
B.. But..

But we cannot allow them to go on shaming our sponsors in the area...
This is cowardly conduct, and thus against Tosei rules.
Leaving only Eizo and ten small fry at the house.
Pl... Please wait, boss.
I want you to kill them.
SWOOSH
So...Tell me I can count on your help.
You're a drifter. You're not even a *sewauchi. But I believe in your skills.
*Sewauchi = a man who has pledged loyalty to another. Goes over a drink in the past.
The rest of the family has already agreed to the plan.
Bunkichi and Kyusaku are your backup.
!
The rest will surround Eizo's house.

We can really relax here...
Hey, Jintetsu. I've been thinking.
The Senjiro clan is the rival of the Eizo clan...
So if you want to kill Eizo, get the Senjiro clan on your side.

.....
What?
ゴロッ
ROLL
It's a full moon tonight.
I feel like I might see ghosts tonight.
Was it something I said?
Wha... What's wrong with you, Jintetsu.
.....

CAW
Is this your father's grave?
……

Has someone been taking care of it for you?
Your father's grave is well cared for.
KIZ
CHIRP CHIRP
Murakami family's tomb

Ah...um... excuse me.
Wai...

Wa...Wait.
You...Jintetsu...
Aren't you Jintetsu?

Jin...
Ah...

But Jintetsu would know me right away..
But the steel mask.
Those eyes.
Hey.
Eh?
Don't be sad just because Kyota hasn't visited in a while
Those eyes were...
Oh gosh...
It's not that at all

Otsuki.
Do you mind delivering something to Master Senjiro's house?
Hello, Taniya-san.
...I wonder if he's mad at me...
...Come to think of it...
Hello
It's awfully quiet here...
...? Strange...
Maybe Kyota is here today...

Bunkichi is his backup. The two of them can handle it ..
And if Kyota is killed?
What's up with Kyota and Eizo?
What...I can hardly hear them..
Once Kyota kills Eizo, I'll see to it Kyota is...
.....
They'll assume Kyota alone is behind the assassination..
Leave his...when Eizo's family returns home they will find his...

With the head of the clan and his successors dead, the clan will die out. The survivors will be unable to rebuild.
We'll take over the town with our reputation intact. It will even bring us credit.
JARI
A flawless plan. Everything will go smoothly, just like that time...
Just like that time four years ago...
Exactly...

GTTA
It was Senjiro...
...who killed Jintetsu's father...
京太
...Kyota...
Inn

KICK
I'm here to kill Eizo. .
I'm Kyota Ishiyin, the Senjiro clan's number-one swordsman.

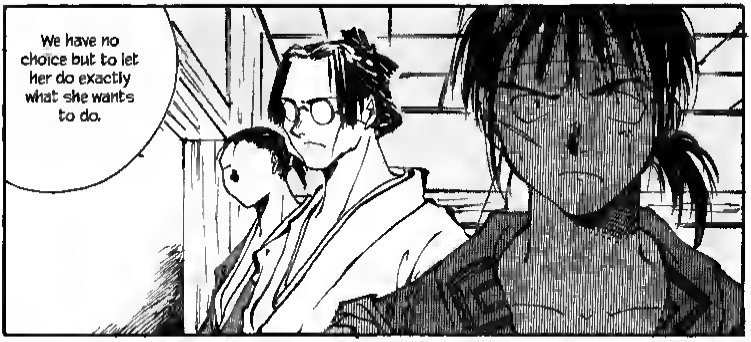
What the hell... ...is going on...
CLATTER
E... Eizo...
Otsuki.
PANT PANT
We... well... that...
By the time I got here they were already...I'm not sure...
Eh...
D...Did you do all this?
Wha...What are you doing here...
KYAH!

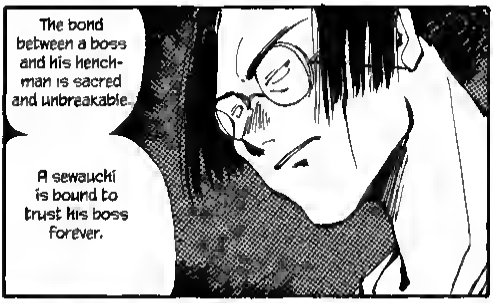
Kyota, get out of here right now.
If you don't, they'll kill you.
Who will be killed, Otsuki-san?
Brother.
I came here to help Kyota but...
...He doesn't need your help after all...

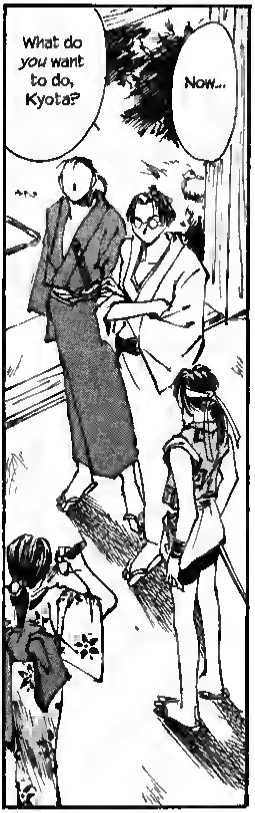
Don't go with them, Kyota.
Good job Let's go home The boss would like to hear all about it.
Well .. But..it wasn't..
They're going to kill you.
It's a trap.
He's just using you.
Senijiro's planning to blame the whole thing on you.
You're not even making any sense.
Otsuki-san, what would possess you say such a thing?

URGH.
CLATTER
If what you're saying is true, explain why we're here helping Kyota.
Because we are here to help. That's the truth.
But...
See, she was just confused...

Kyota.
If you don't listen to me, I'll kill myself.
O... Otsuki... what are you doing...
I'm serious. I know all about their plans, so they're going to kill me anyway...
...After they kill you...


We have no choice but to let her do exactly what she wants to do.

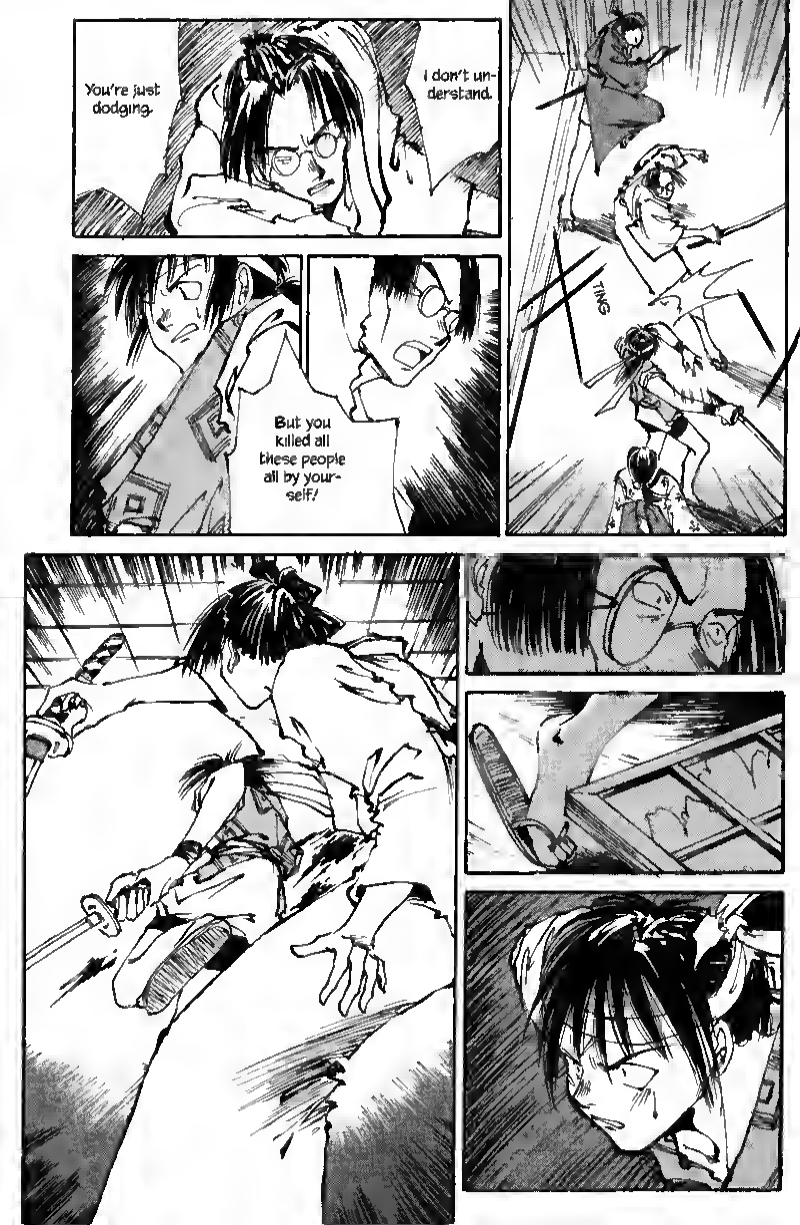

The bond between a boss and his henchman is sacred and unbreakable.
A sewauchi is bound to trust his boss forever.


What do *you* want to do, Kyota?
Now...

Kyota.
Your boss, Senjiro...
.. ordered the murder of the woodcarver four years ago.
And what of his kindness in making a drifter like you a member of his family?

Do you trust me?
Shut up, you.
Kyota, my life is in your hands.
Enough with your nonsense. I can't allow even a katagi to get away with this.
DMD

Things have gotten out of control. You leave me no choice...
Crap..
I don't know what's going on, but I do know I can't let Otsuki die.
Any-way...
Shall we kill the both of them here? It isn't easy to cover up the murder of a katagi...
Kyota...I need your help just a little bit longer.


You're just dodging.
I don't understand.
But you killed all these people all by yourself!
TING

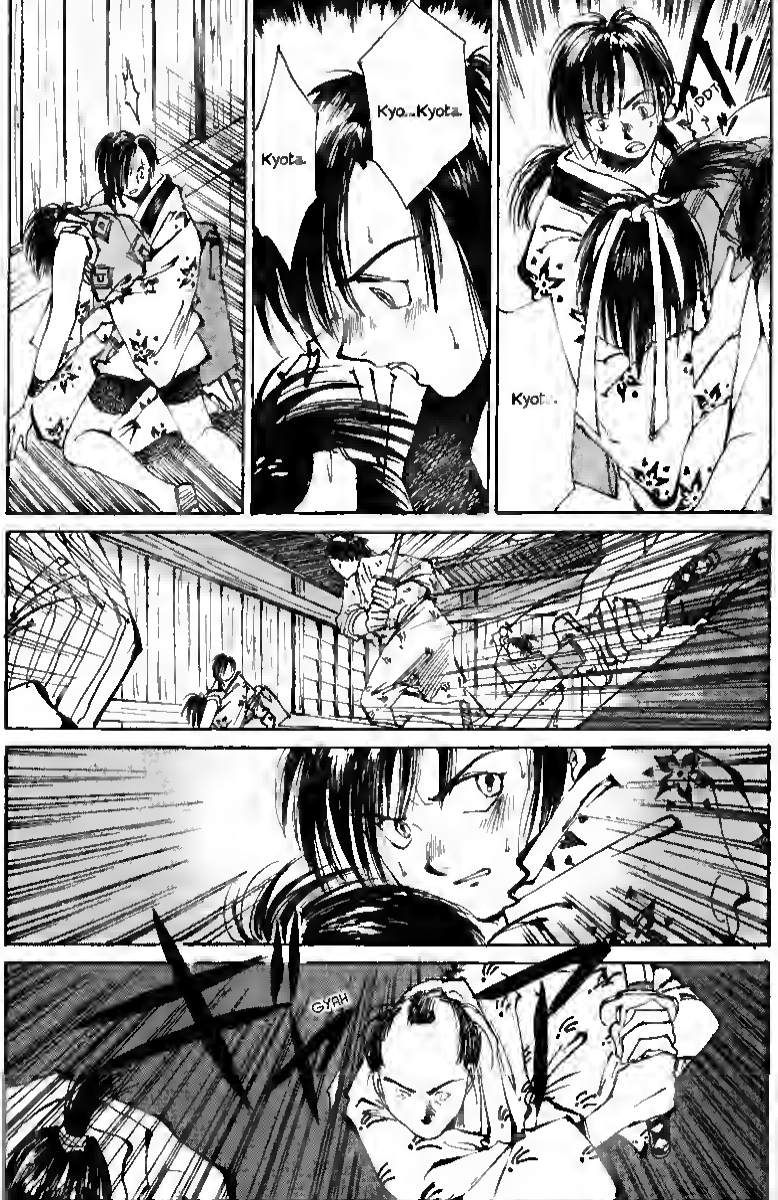
Ge...Get away from me...
SWOOSH
SWOOSH
Otsuki.
PANT PANT
Otsuki.
STAB

I was afraid this would happen
Senjiro.

Damn it. I trusted you.
I thought you believed in me.
As the clan grows more powerful, a struggle was inevitable.
I had no choice but to make a sacrifice.
No...it's impossible.
O... Obsuki... can you escape?

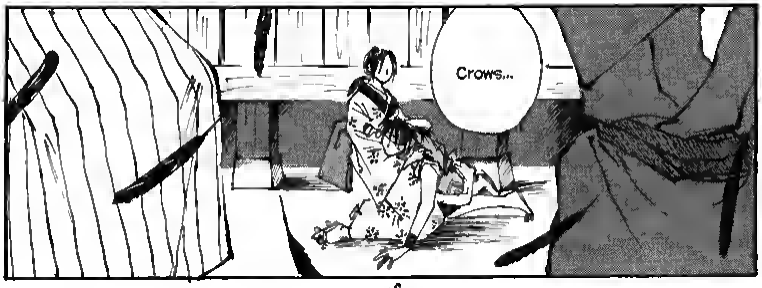
What's wrong...
Your hands are shaking...
COUGH
KYAAH!

BST
STAGGER
It's okay, I'm fine.
Kyota!

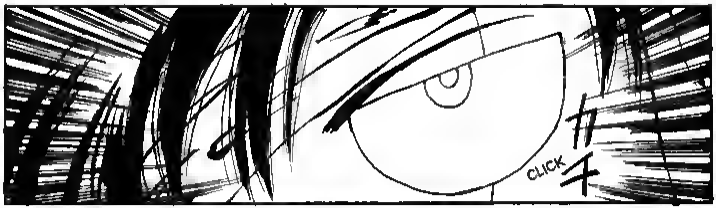

Kyo...Kyota.
Kyota.
DO?
Kyot...
GYAH

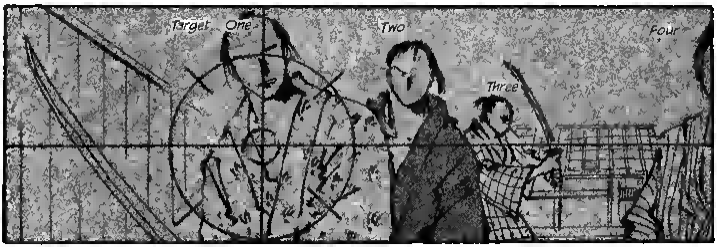
What the hell... ...was that...
Wha...

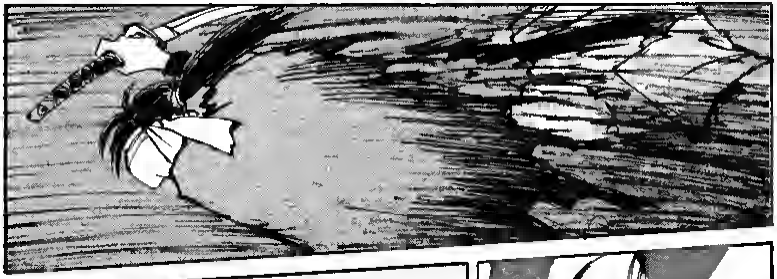
Where did all these crows come from?


Crows...

!
And who might you be?
SWOOSSH

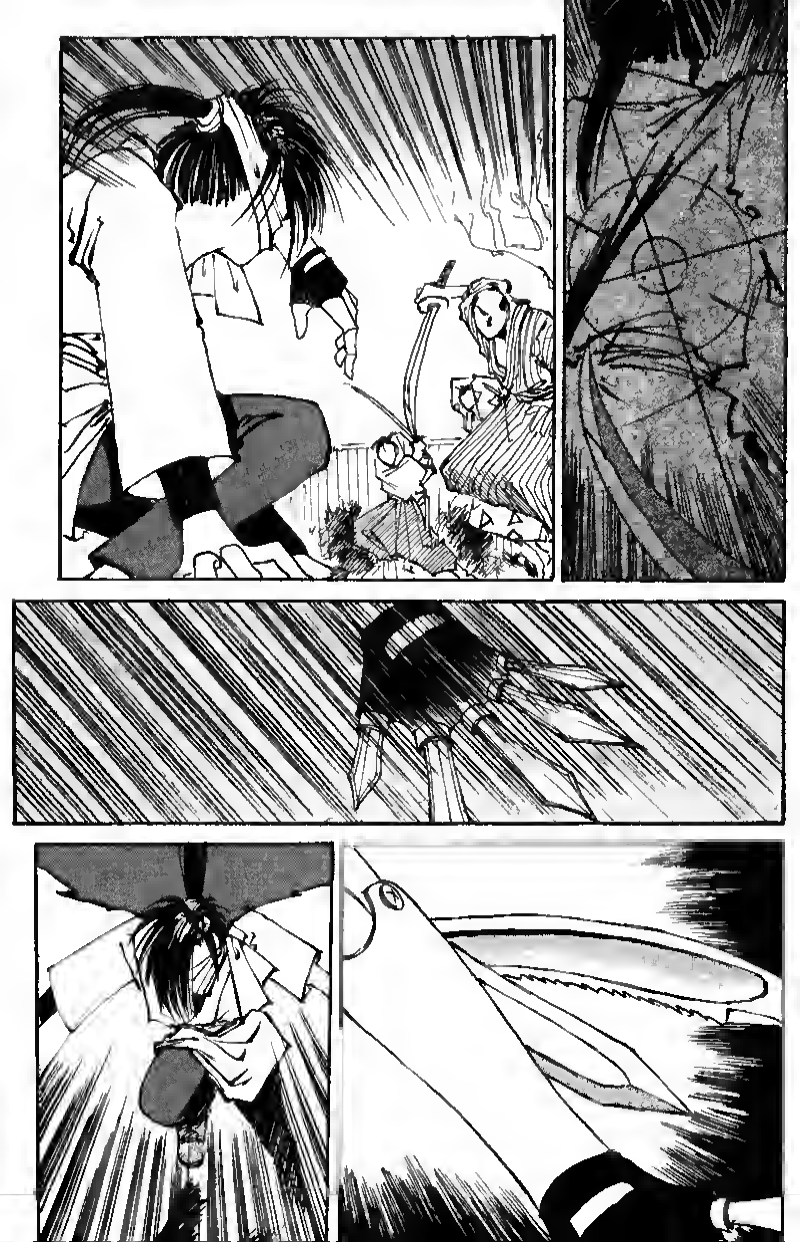

CLICK

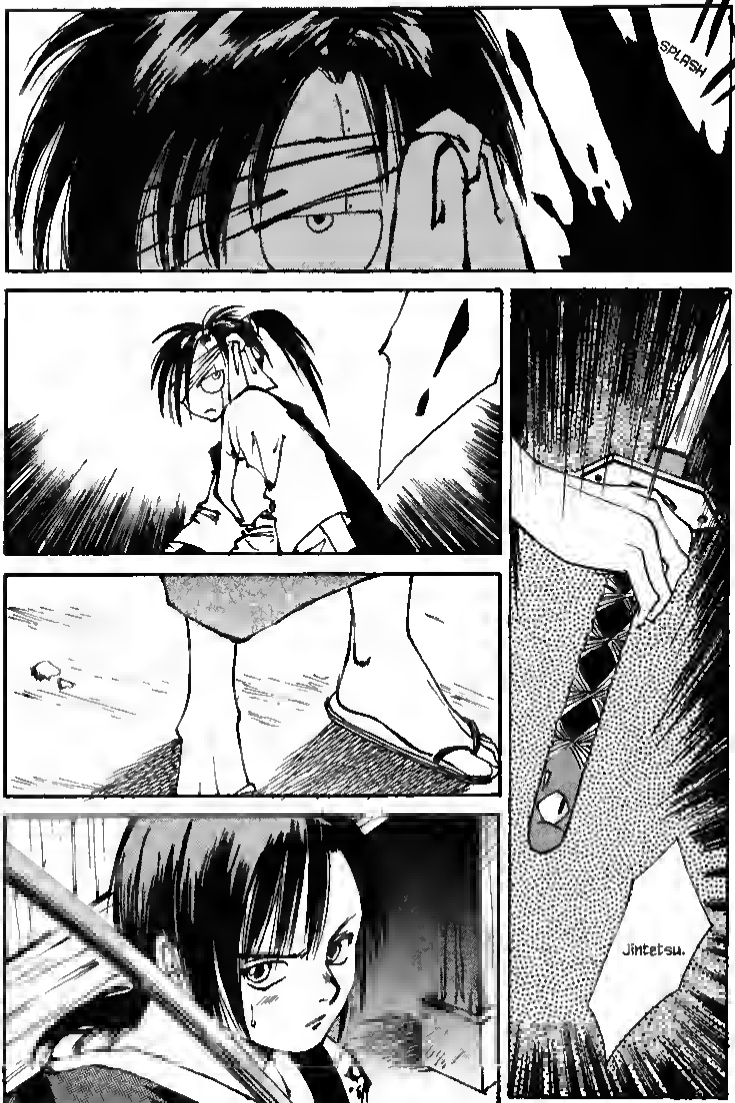

Target
One
Two
Three
Four



Damn
you...

CLICK




SPLASH
!
Jintetsu.

.....

..Jintetsu..
..You must be..

I thought you were dead.
I was dead..
!
チャ

I killed the village head to avenge my father. They called me a criminal and pursued me.
I killed my pursuers. So they called me an assassin
and offered a bounty for my head. In the end, some petty underling killed me.
But..
My only regret was that I died before I killed Eizo...

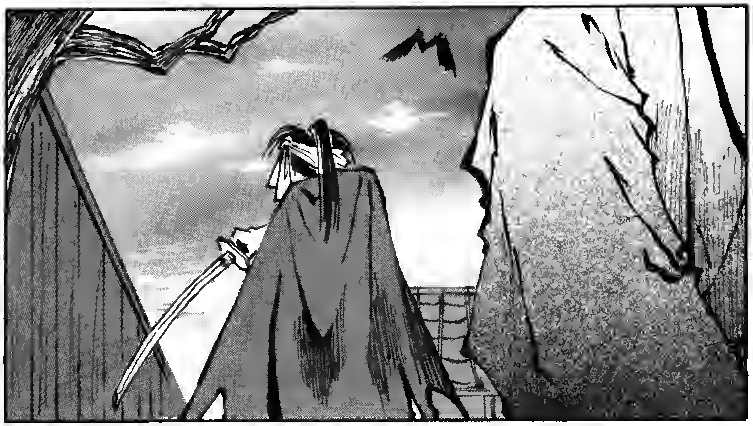
..You're right.
I was behind it all.
To intimidate the villagers, I had to make an example of someone.
I let it be known that the village head and Eizo were in business together. Then I spread a rumor that the village head arranged the murder.
Since it involved the governor and Eizo, I knew everyone would be too scared to interfere. I never guessed someone would kill the village head.
This time you were going to betray a member of your own clan.
I've been waiting for the right time..
I made so much money for Eizo and yet he didn't name me his successor.
Hand over your sword.
Oops.
Don't move.
!!
!
!?
SHA!

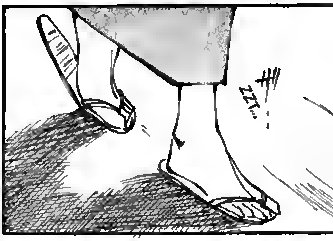
URGH...
SLICE
Jintetsu, don't. Don't worry about me, just kill him
Coward. Just go ahead and kill me now.
.. My sword will cut you before you can attack me...
..but that's not the only weapon I have...
I can give you my sword..

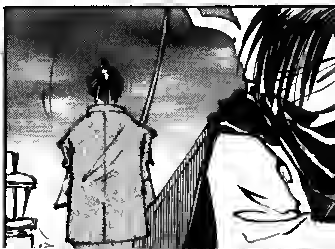
The dead should stay dead...
...I'll put you underground where you belong.
STAB

A dead man who refuses to join the soil...
...is doomed to be resurrected again and again...

...along with other spirits...




ZZT...



DSSH
Kyota.
UGH..

The bone's not broken.
When the bleeding stops, apply this balm to the wound..
Jintetsu
...Jintetsu, right..?
You are..
.....

I've been waiting for you.
You finally came back.
.....
I don't even care what happened the past four years.
I...I won't ask you anything.
The Jintetsu you knew is dead.
Hey! Jintetsu or whatever.
...I'm getting tired of listening to your crap...
Kyota.
OUCH
Fight with me.

STAGGER
You see.
Wha...What are you talking about? You're already badly injured.
Jintetsu is dead.
CAW
BSSH
.....
Jintetsu...
ZZT

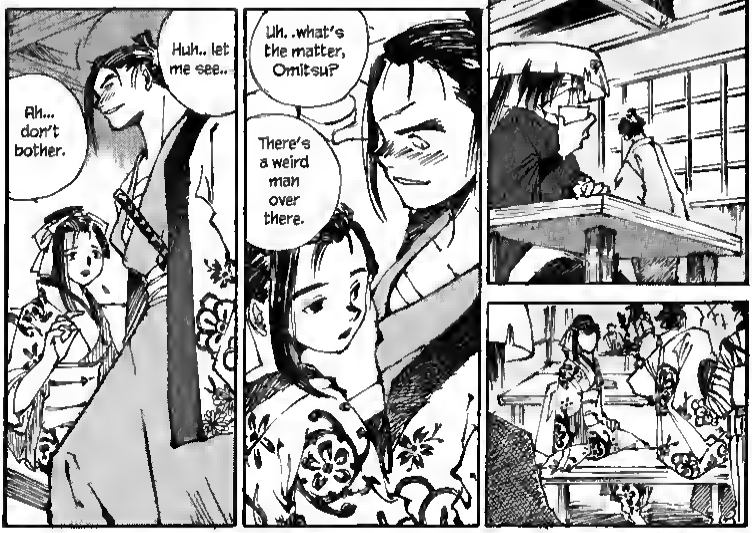
You just saw his ghost...
-THE END OF CHAPTER 2-

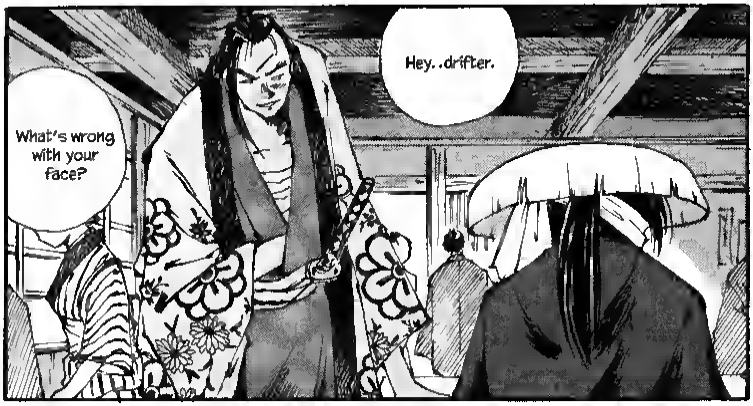
第三幕
CAT GIRL
（鏈貓）
Chapter 3 CAT GIRL

Wait a minute!
Phew. It's not us he's chasing.
What the hell, I didn't steal very much.
?

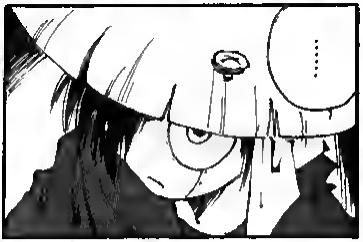
Out of my way.
CRASH
GASP!
Hold up, kid.
DASH
DASH
Wait..
PANT
PANT
What was that all about?

What did you just pick up?
See you later.
Is that a Hebsuke?


Huh.. let me see..
Ah... don't bother.
Uh. .what's the matter, Omitsu?
There's a weird man over there.


Hey. .drifter.
What's wrong with your face?

If you're trying to conceal your scars, that mask isn't the way to do it.


.....

Wha..
CLATTER
Don't be silly.
You shouldn't hide your scars. Be proud. Show them off. They're like medals
CHITTER CHITTER
Pl. Please take your fight outside
...What the hell did you just say!
BBT

Are you running away!?
You won't get away from me.
And why would I run away from a coward like you?
You.. you little..
SWOOSH
You're nothing but a drifter.

CRASH
ZZZ
GIGGLE GIGGLE
What are you looking at!
CHATTER CHATTER
Wait...
OUCH!
Pardon me.

I was wrong. I'm sorry for saying things you never wanted to say.
DDDDTT
I'll never do it again
CLICK CLICK CLICK
Hey, are you listening?
SNAP SNAP
I said I was wrong.
Can we go now? Or else I'll get rusty
You're evil!
After all, I'm a state-of-the-art device.

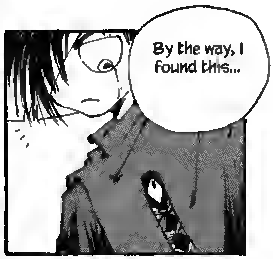
!
Hey, drifter.

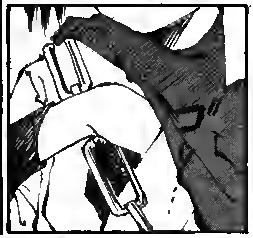
What are you doing on my turf?

SPLASH
.....

What, do you want to fight?
Wha...
PHEWW!
SPLASH
CLICK
No...No way.
I don't like a Toseinin. Go somewhere else.
...All right.
I just need a place to stay for the night.
Don't worry. I won't hurt you.

GASP!
Is this yours?


By the way, I found this...



If it's that important,
take better care of it next time.

GRAB

Whe... Where did you find it?

Earlier today, on the street.
You bumped into me

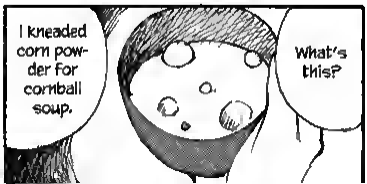
If it's just for one night, I'll let you stay with me.
Wait!
Thank you, I appreciate it.
You must be hungry, right?
I have food, at my place...

I don't have anything fancy to eat.
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
SQUEAK
Did you see me fight?
For a young guy, you're pretty strong.
Wow... I'm impressed.
SQUEAK
Don't sit there or the house will tilt.
Do you live here alone?
.....
Aren't you proud of me?
Yeah... Built it myself.
Well, maybe I had some help.
CLATTER

That samurai...for a gang member or whatever...
...he was wearing a nice kimono.
Ah...he's in the Hanada gang.
Hanada gang?
What is that?
A gang whose members are the children of samurai.

They're pretty vicious.
Ouch
あち。
They're murderers and thieves They would do anything to get what they want The villagers are afraid of them but..
...because they're from samurai families, the government won't touch them.

Here you go
Ah... Thank you.
Why would children from good families do such things?
For them, it's all a game


What's this?
I kneaded corn powder for cornball soup.

SLURP SLURP

.....

GLUG GLUG

And I have the rice cakes I stole today.

I have nowhere to go.
I'm a homeless drifter.

I see.. on the road to nowhere, huh... Sounds like fun.

Especially one with a face like mine
Not always. Everywhere I go, nobody likes a drifter.

You eat in a strange way
So where are you headed?

Where are your parents?
My mom and dad got sick and died three years ago.
Yeah, kind of
Your life doesn't seem so easy either.
My family used to own a key store.
So I can open almost any lock.
...that's why I live like a thief.
Okay...so I am a thief.
I don't have any other family...
And I'm quick like a cat.
So it's natural that I make my living by doing what I do.
Don't misunderstand me. I never steal anything valuable.
I see.
You'd steal in order to survive, right?

I'm not sure. .Perhaps
Are you a hit man?
Yeah. I've killed, too.
Are you going to kill me?
No.. I have nothing to gain by killing you.

I make my living killing people.
But I refuse to kill a katagi, so don't worry.
Living like this will only lead me to death.
But I don't think murder should be a way of life...

Aren't you afraid of death?
When I died I lost my voice. Instead, I was given a talking sword.
I can't talk without the sword. And the sword can't do anything without me
So we'd be lost without each other.
I've been dead before.
Wh...t?
This body is stee...
..you wouldn't believe me.
HA HA! You're pretty funny.
Stop joking around with that mask face.

But...I'm afraid of dying.
I'm lucky I managed to live this long.
In a fire.
Why?
Ha.
Until last year, I lived in an old row house on the edge of town.
The residents were all old people or kids like me.
A fire started by the Hanada gang.
People like us don't mean anything to them
Why did they do that?
Like I said before, it's all a game to them.
But...they all died...

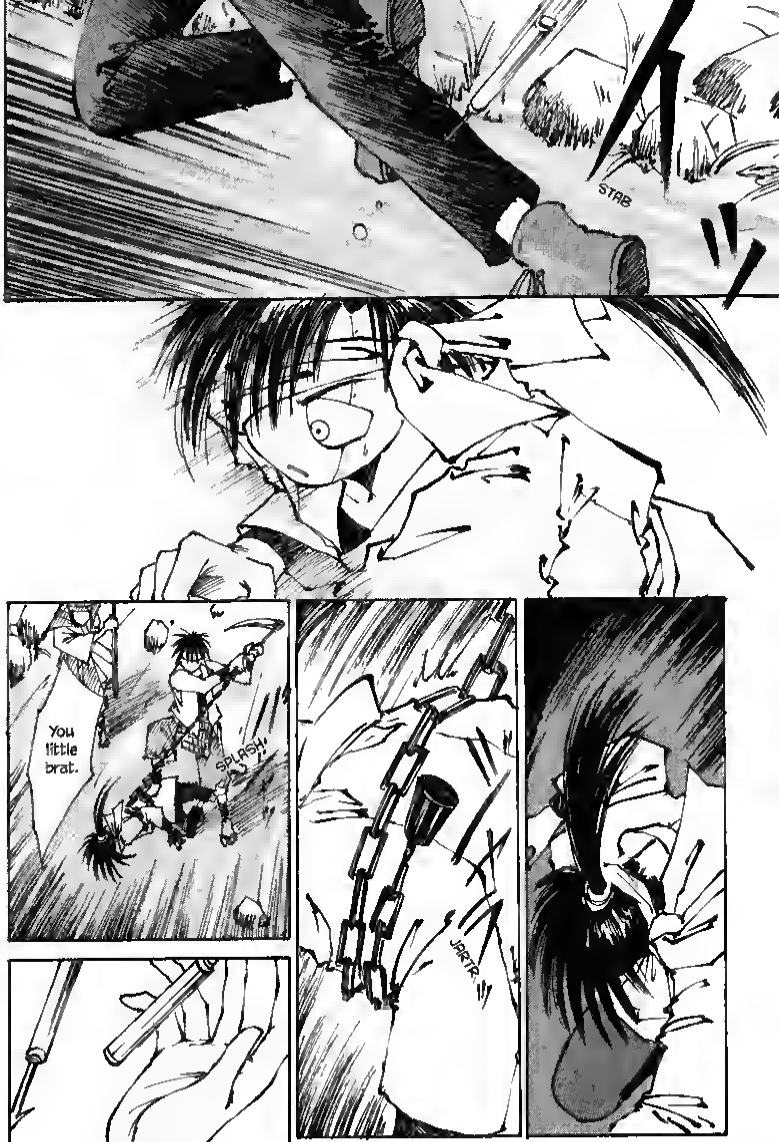
But ..
I feel better now that I'm all by myself.
.....
Because ..
Now I don't have to worry about losing anyone and feeling sad ..
Thanks for finding my cat.
It was a gift from my dad. My name is Tagane, by the way. What's yours?
Yeah .. the moon looks so beautiful.
I'm going to bed now.
That's the way I think... Sorry if I'm depressing you.
What are you going to do?

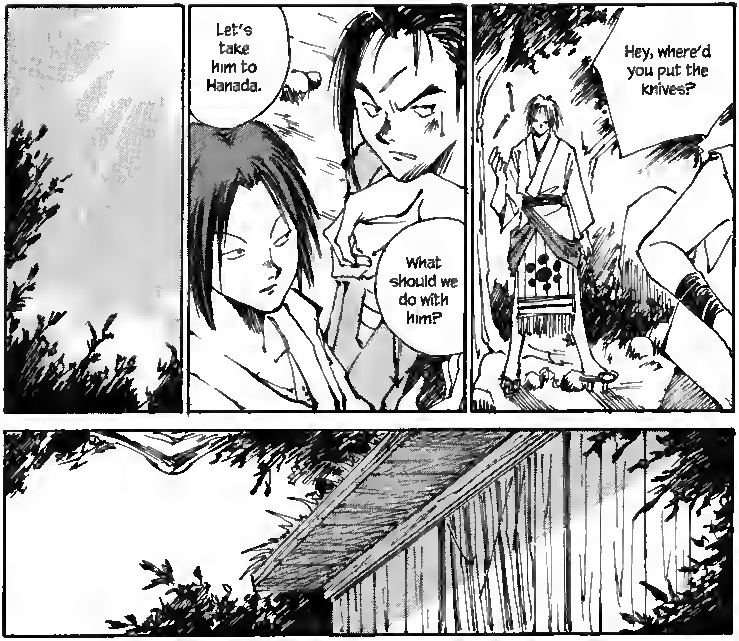
What happened to your face?
Hey, can I ask you something?
Oops.
Jintetsu, the steel man...
.....
This...
...This is almost like karma.

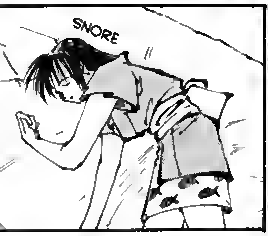
SPLASH
STAB
STAB
STAB
STAB
!
.....

SHU...
Nice to see you again.
I heard you might be out here.
SST

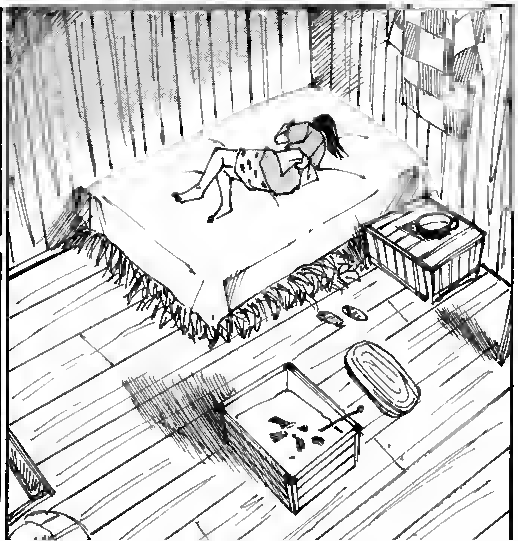
SWOOSH
GRAB
JERK
JAKING
KICK
DASH
WOW.


STAB
You little brat.
SPLASH
JERK


Let's take him to Hanada.
What should we do with him?
Hey, where'd you put the knives?


SNORE

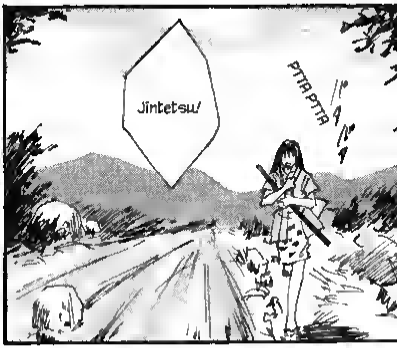
...

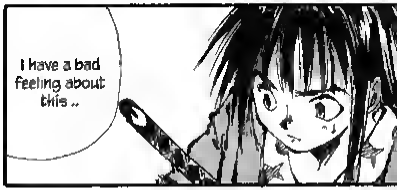


Jin-tetsu?
Did someone call me?
Uh..
SQUEAK
What?

Where could he have gone without his sword?
It's heavy.
It's weird that he'd forget his sword..
I thought it was important to him?
Here you go.
You know, it's strange...it looks like it has an eye.
Almost like it's alive...
I'll leave it inside the house.
.....
CLATTER

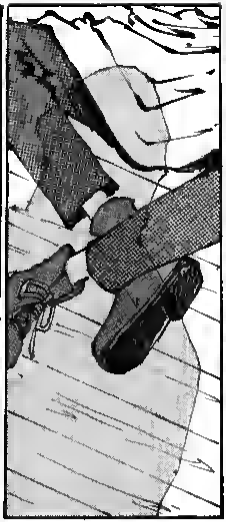
PIG

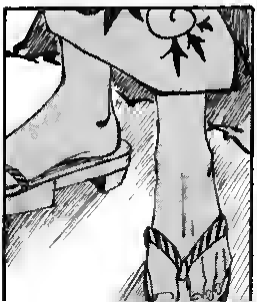

Jintetsu!
PTTAPTTA


I have a bad feeling about this..

Ah!

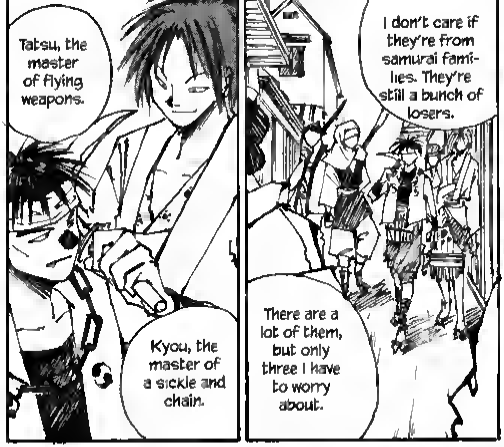
This must be..

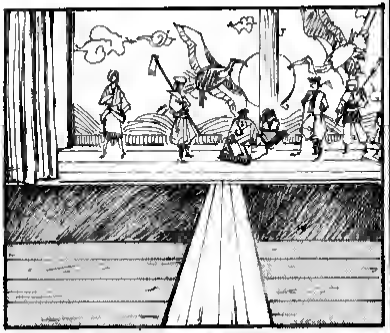


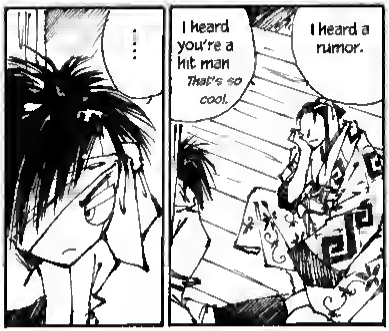


What's your name?
……

Show me the face behind that strange mask...
...I suppose...
...it doesn't matter.
CLICK
Uh.. are you perhaps ..
PTMP
PTMP
They hang out at that theater on the edge of town
No, you idiot.
Hey, Tagane, someone chasing you again?


Tatsu, the master of flying weapons.
Kyou, the master of a sickle and chain.
I don't care if they're from samurai families. They're still a bunch of losers.
There are a lot of them, but only three I have to worry about.
I hope your master is still alive.




I heard you're a hit man
That's so cool.
I heard a rumor.
.....

And the boss, Hanada Mouri.
His gangsters are all under eighteen. They wear fancy clothes and lead a life of luxury...apparently that's their ideology.

So how'd you like to join our group?
You're even just about my age.
And being a drifter must be so dull.
They say we abuse our family's authority and just gad about doing whatever we like.
And they're right.
But tell me, what's wrong with that? It's only human nature to do what one likes.
And it's the government's fault they can't control us.

Our lives are our own.
We live without regrets. We want to live fast and burn up bright, like firecrackers...
...We choose to live for the moment.

We were born into samurai families.
We didn't choose to be who we are.

We're expected to slave away for the court and become conservative and dreary.
But I will never be like my father.

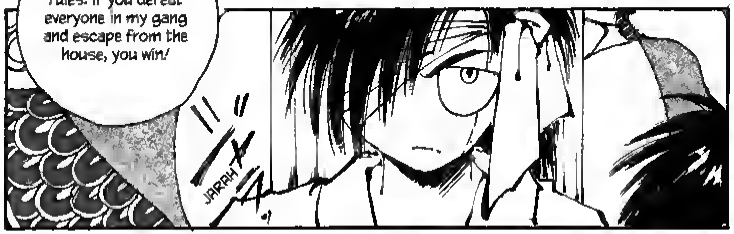
We want nothing...
...Not status, not fame, not security...

Surely you have your reasons for choosing your livelihood.
So you can see where I'm coming from.

.....

Too bad, I thought you could understand.
.....
.....
!
Let him go.
Wait, listen to me.
Wha ..Are you going to just let him go? Let's beat him up first.
How about a game?
Jintetsu-san or whatever. .

It's boring beating up someone who can't fight back.


So here are the rules. If you defeat everyone in my gang and escape from the house, you win!
JARRH!

PANT...

JIRI...

Of course, safely...

Jintetsu is inside.
GASP

Yo..
The sword just talked
Oops. Please don't drop me
Since Jintetsu is nearby...
...I can finally speak.
?
?
My brain is in Jintetsu's head.
Anyway, I'm not an evil spirit.
Just pretend I'm a windup doll.
You know, like one of those wind-up swords that's all the rage in Edo.
SWOOSH
Damn you.
CRASH

ZKK
TING
Damn it.

Tagane, use the key.
There you are, Jin-tetsu!
I've never dealt with such a big lock.
SEARCHING
GAJI-K
GAJI-K
You really have done this before.
KA-CHAK KA-CHAK
This key won't work.

Running away won't do you any good.
JUMP
PUNCH
ARGH.

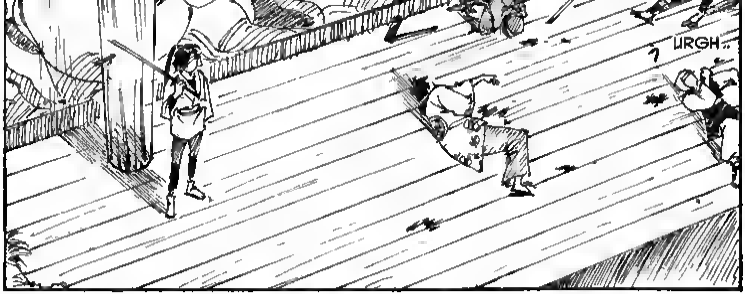
SSHT
RRRM
JAKA-T

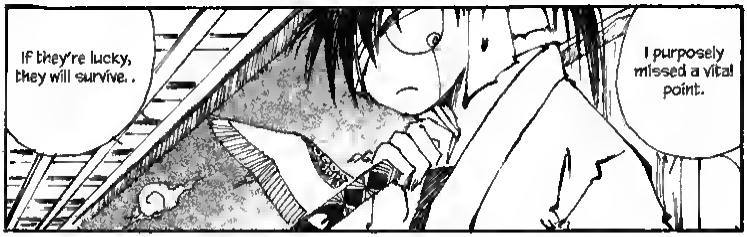
!
GASP!
Jintetsu!
BAM
KA-CHINK!
It worked.
...?

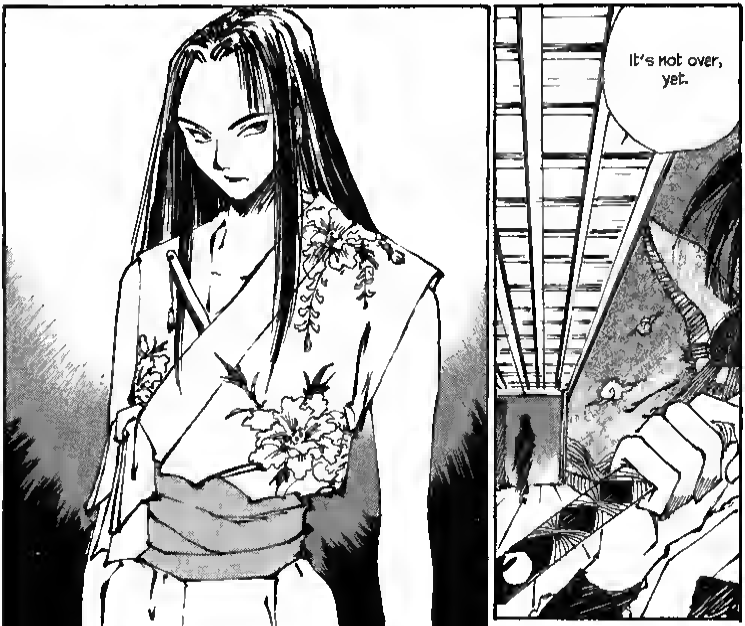
CATCH
You made me worry about you so much
Take this.
Here we go.
SWOOSH
TARGET

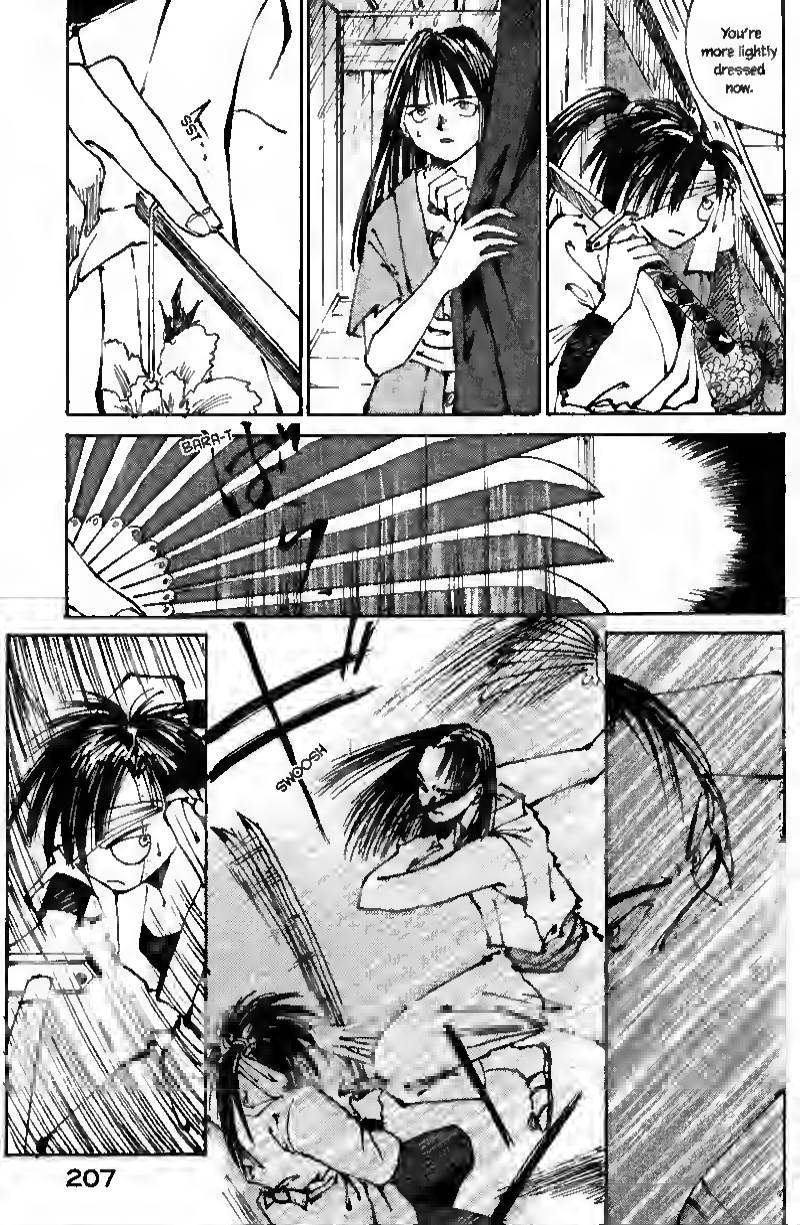
TING
KA-T

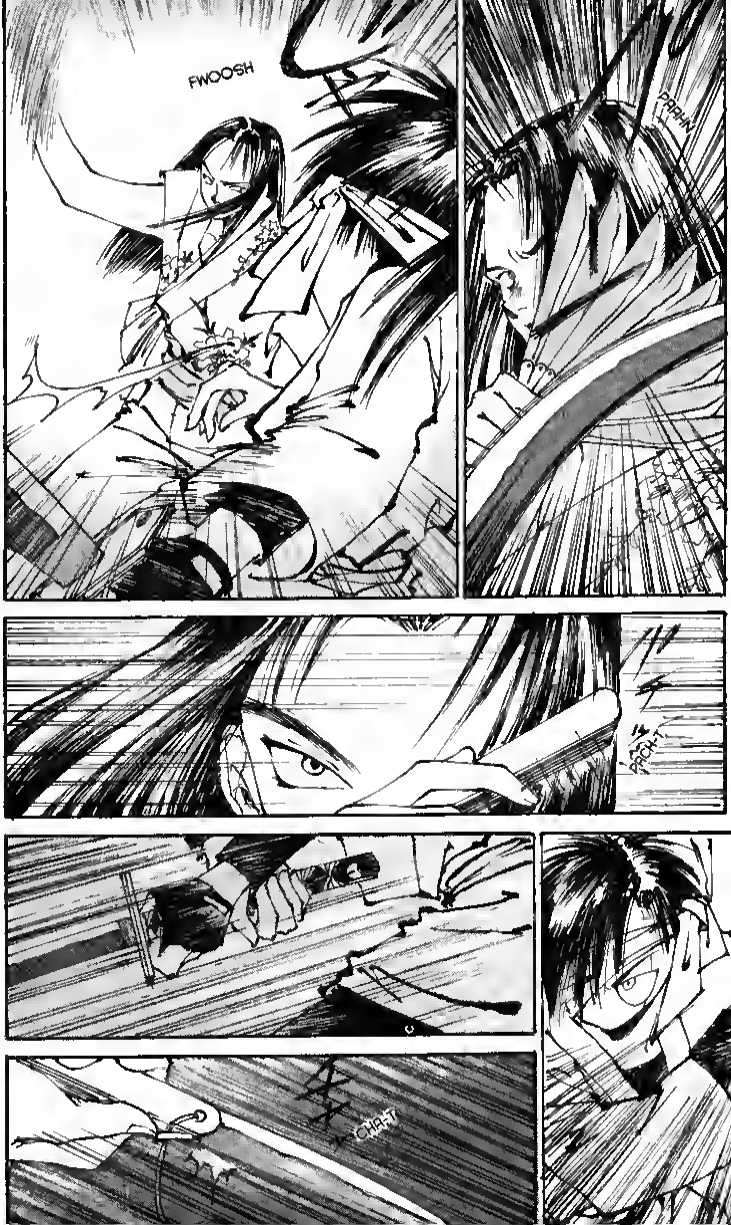
SWOOSSH
KAKA-T
KA-SHAN
GRAB

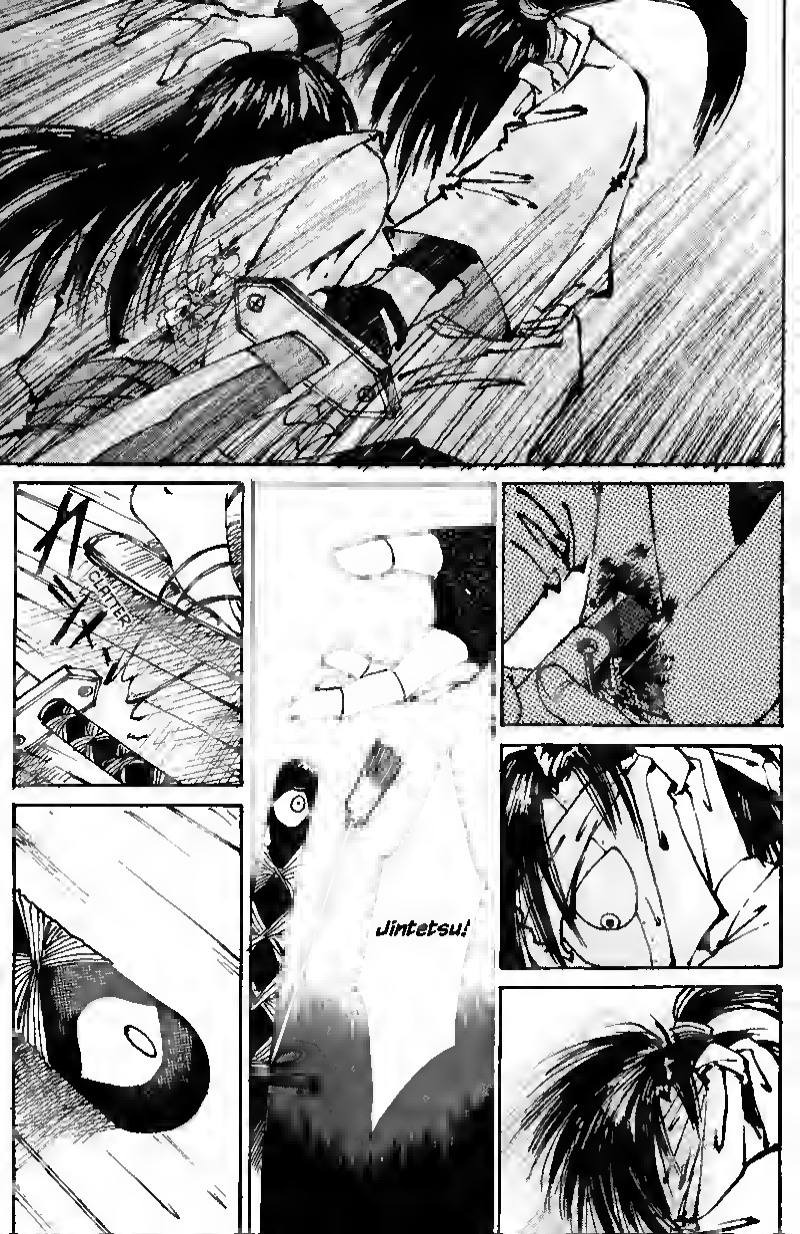

URGH..


If they're lucky, they will survive..
I purposely missed a vital point.


It's not over, yet.

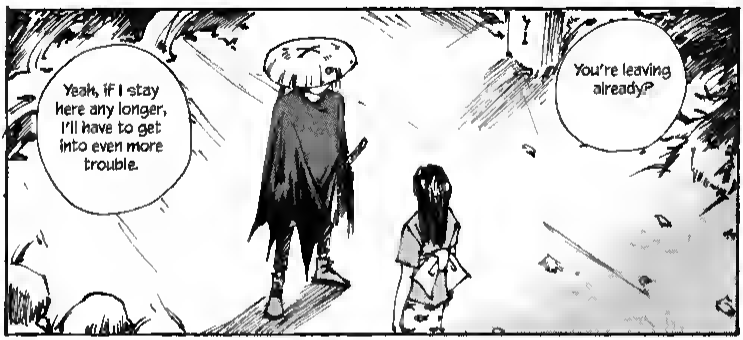

You're more lightly dressed now.
BARA-T
SWOOSH


FWOOSH
PRRHH
PRCH-T
CHANT


CLATTER
Jintetsu!

...A girl from the row house...

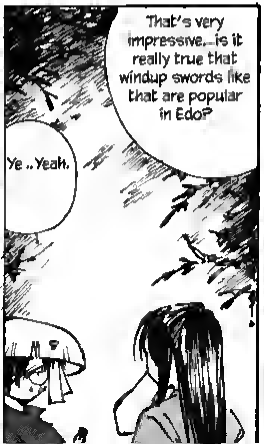
UGH...
CLATTER
Go.
You've won.
Don't be foolish ...Put yourself first.
As for me, what goes around comes around.
If you're lucky, you live, if not, you die. That's life.
Should I get help for you?
Jintetsu-san, you know it as well as I do...


Yeah, if I stay here any longer, I'll have to get into even more trouble.
You're leaving already?

Yes.. he'll be okay.. he's tougher than an ordinary human being.

Your injury..
Are you okay?

Take care of yourself.
Use your talent to live an honest and good life.


That's very impressive.. is it really true that windup swords like that are popular in Edo?
Ye..Yeah.

Jintetsu.
I kinda like living this way, because it's easy
Well... I'll think about it.
Since you're leaving, I'd like to give you a present...
..But I have nothing to give.. I'm sorry.
You're silly.. a send-off gift is for the person who's leaving..
RUSTLE
...Bye...
SST...
.....
SCRATCH
SCRATCH

RUSTLE
Alone again...
Like I said before..
You can't live without me.
You know what I mean, Jintetsu.
You understand, right?
-THE END OF KUROGANE VOL 1-

Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more art than science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction in our translation of the work, or where a Japanese cultural difference is used.

A bounty for his head, *page 3*
During Japan's feudal period, when the government wanted to get rid of a criminal or social outcast, it would put out signs offering a bounty—reward money—for the head of the fugitive.

So it's hard to make ends meet.
PARA
PARA
I shouldn't say this out loud but...
...I make a living selling marijuana and opium powder.
Ah...That's the stuff!
Genkichi's pipe

Ryou, *page 17*
A *ryou* was a coin used during the Edo period. Some other Edo-period coins are the *bu* and the *shu*. One *bu* was equivalent to a quarter of a *ryou*, and one *shu* was equal to one quarter of a *bu*.

Genkichi's pipe, *page 17*
Genkichi's pipe is a *kiselu*, a traditional hand-made pipe. A *kiselu* has a long straight shank and a small bowl, which is usually stuffed with shredded tobacco. The word *kiselu* comes from the Cambodian word for pipe, *khsier*.

***Dutch Studies**, page 64*
This phrase refers to the study of Western science and culture. After the mid-Edo period (1603–1867), this study was usually conducted in Dutch, thanks to the many Japanese scholars who could understand and translate Dutch. Dutch studies included medical science, astronomy, military science, physics, and natural science

***Katagi**, page 71*
Katagi literally means serious and staid. In this context, it refers to citizens with honest occupations—as opposed to gangsters, mafiosos, prostitutes, and geisha (professional entertainers trained in traditional dancing and music).

Tea stem floating upright in teacup, *page 77*
Here Jintetsu is looking at a tea stem that's floating upright in his tea. A tea stem floating upright in tea is considered a good omen. Look out for a tea stem the next time you drink green tea...maybe you'll find a sign of good luck!

***Toseinin**, page 98*
A *toseinin* is a member of the *yakuza* (gang/mafia) or a gambler, one who hasn't taken up an honest occupation. A *toseinin* must live by a very strict code of conduct. For example, a *toseinin* who wants to go straight and leave the gang may be required to cut off his pinky finger.

***Han**, page 18*
A *han* was a feudal clan or feudal domain and were the fiefs of feudal clans. *Han* existed during the Edo period (1603–1867) and for a few years just after the Meiji Ishin (or Restoration) (1866–1869). In July 1871, all the *han* were disbanded and replaced by the prefecture system. The *daimyo*, the feudal lords, swore loyalty to the shogun (the general) and led most of the *han*. Although the number of han varied, typically there were around 300 *han* during the Edo period.

***"In traveling what one wants is a companion, in life compassion."**, page 55*
In Japanese, this reads. *tabiwa michizure yowa nasake*. It is a well-known proverb.

Your father's grave is well cared for..., page *110*
Ohakomoiri is a traditional ritual, a visit to an ancestor's grave to pay one's respects. Duties at the *ohakomoiri* include cleaning the grave, burning incense, decorating the grave with flower bouquets and prayer.

Netsuke, page *162*
Starting from the Edo period, an *inro* (a samurai's pillbox, often crafted artistically with an elaborate mother-of-pearl inlay or lacquered with gold and silver designs) or a cigarette case were usually carried attached to the *obi* (belt for kimono). In order to keep them from getting stolen or lost, a catch or strap called a *netsuke* was attached to the *inro* or the cigarette case with a string. A *netsuke* could be crafted with such elaborate inlays that, when viewed from different angles, it would look completely different from each view!

BLACK STEEL

Avenging his father's murder is a matter of honor for the young samurai Jintetsu. But it turns out that the killer is a corrupt government official—and now the powers that be are determined to hunt Jintetsu down like an animal. There's only one problem: Jintetsu is already dead.

Torn to pieces by a pack of dogs, Jintetsu's ravaged body has been found by Genkichi, outcast and master inventor. Genkichi gives the dead boy a new, indestructible steel body and a talking sword—just what he'll need to face down the gang that's terrorizing his hometown and the mobster who ordered his father's hit. But what about Otsuki, the beautiful girl he left behind? Steel armor is defense against any sword, but it can't save Jintetsu from the pain in his heart.

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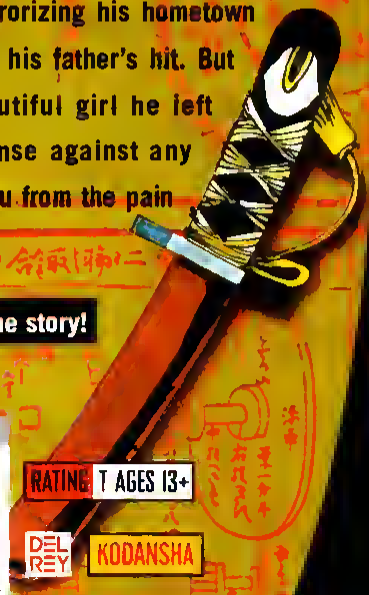

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